

MOUNTAIN DOCTRINE

TIBETAN BUDDHISM



Dol-Bo-Ba Shay-Rap-Gyel-Tsen

BERSERKER

BOOKS



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Mountain Dharma, the Ocean of Definitive Meaning

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THE TRANSLATION

**Mountain Dharma, the Ocean
of Definitive Meaning: The
Uncommon Pith Instructions
on the Ultimate**

Prologue

This text is an explanation of the extraordinary, quintessential instructions that include the essence of all the profound scriptures of the ultimate definitive meaning.

(1). **Entering Into the Explanation**

OM Namo guru buddha bodhisattvabhyoḥ namo namaḥ.¹

This text is *Mountain Dharma, the Ocean of Definitive Meaning*. It consists of extraordinary instructions about ultimate reality.

I prostrate to glorious Vajrasattva.²

I prostrate to the ground to be purified of **incidental** defilements, sugatagarbha.

I prostrate to the path that purifies from **incidental** defilements, vajra yoga.

I prostrate to the fruition of separation, the ground that was purified of **incidental** defilements, dharmakāya.

First, I bow to all the supreme, exalted gurus.
Though that of which I speak, the aspect of light, is subtle;
Cleansing thick and measureless darkness from the essence,
They make the appearances of total purity blossom.

[I bow] to that which, isolated from all phenomena,³
Is yet the kāya of countless, undefiled phenomena;⁴
Though separate⁵ from the selfhood of dharmas and individuals,⁶
Transcending the extremes of existence and non-existence,
It abides as the swastika of eternal stability.⁷

[Reality] does not have any natures of [incidental] things. [I] bow to it as natural luminosity. It is also known as:

1. **the ground that is** a great treasure,
2. **the path** to be practiced with great effort, in means to attain it,
and
3. **the fruition** to be attained that establishes all goals.

Taught according to the completely correct scriptures, as if revealed by a being with the divine eye, [manifestation of] luminosity is born from the accumulation of merit, the good [relative] seeds of a victorious one. **These awaken the blossoming of the enlightened family**, with all the qualities of the completely ripened fruition.

I also prostrate to the form kāyas, growing like a great tree that bears the abundant fruit of supremacy. These are the great sages' kāyas of symbolic indication.

I shall write, as told in the scriptures, how realization grows from that cause [of merit]. **For these [teachings], keep in mind, on all occasions, the profound oral instructions that distinguish [the scope of] final dissolution and non-dissolution of existence, non-existence, eternity, nothingness, and so forth.**

(2). **The Actual Explanation Entered Into**

A. **A Brief Explanation of the Ground, Path, and Fruition**

1. **An Abbreviated Teaching of the Ground, Path, and Fruition of the Definitive Meaning**

When there is attainment of supreme liberation, naturally luminous dharmakāya, self-arisen pristine wisdom, the pure, blissful, eternal [true] self, **the ultimate that abides forever, pervading space**; here is what should first be known by those who aspire to benefit all beings through the [two] form kāyas.

In the ground under the house of a poor man, a great treasure might exist; but, obscured by earth and rocks to [the height of] seven men, it is not seen, realized, or attained; and so, that poor man remains in suffering.

Similarly, though the great treasure that is the qualities of dharmakāya always exists, **like all-pervading space**, within oneself and all others; it is obscured by incidental obscurations, so that we do not see, realize, or attain it. Thus, all sentient beings always remain in suffering.

I. The ground: From immaculate scriptures and reasoning, through possessing the special [practice] instructions of the holy gurus, we can understand 1) how it is possible to attain this **essence of the way things are**; and 2) how **defilements, the ordinary way of confusion**, can be purified [from it].

This is like knowing, from the treasure being well and truly shown by beings with the divine eye, that there is a great treasure that can be attained, and just how the earth and rocks that cover it can be removed. If the covering that obscures the treasure is not removed, the treasure will not be attained; while, by simply clearing away **the obscuring covering**, it will be.

II. The path: When [we] have understood that, what [we] should practice to clear away all incidental defilements is the accumulation of completely pure pristine wisdom, with its retinue of [intrinsic] enlightened qualities. Accomplishing that is like clearing away the [covering] earth and rocks, with the height of seven men.

III. The fruition: What is attained by practicing that is the fruition of separating [all defilements from] the great treasure – undefiled dharmakāya, with [all] the inseparable, **absolute** qualities that are **co-essential with it**. That fruition is like well and truly attaining the precious treasure.

2. **An Abbreviated Teaching of How These [Points] are Established by Scripture.**

Question: How do [we] know that these [points] are like that?

Answer: These things are known from brilliantly lucid teachings by the Buddha and bodhisattvas [of the tenth level]. The Buddha says in the *Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra*:

Children of noble family,⁸ it is like this: For example, in the ground under the store room⁹ in the house of a poor man, a great treasure the size of that store room might exist, replete with wealth and gold, but covered by earth to a depth of seven men’s [height]. That great treasure would not say to that poor man, “O man! I am a great treasure covered in the earth;” because that great treasure is not a sentient being **with** the nature of mind, **and so it does not know how to speak**. That poor man who is the owner of the house lives in poverty mentality. Though he walks right over the treasure, he has never heard of it. He neither knows nor sees the great treasure that is under the earth, in his own house.

Children of noble family, sentient beings’ attached mental activity poor man’s house. Under it exists sugatagarbha, the great treasury [containing] the treasure of the powers and fearlessnesses **of the absolute nature of phenomena**. That dharmatā of dharmas has the unshared qualities of a buddha and all the **further absolute** qualities of buddhahood, transcending in number of grains of sand of the river Ganges.

However, since sentient beings are attached to [ordinary] forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touchables; they cycle in saṃsāra, due to [the resultant] suffering. Because they have never heard about that great treasure of **absolute** qualities; they cannot obtain it, and they cannot cleanse it of incidental defilements.

Then, children of noble family, a **relative** tathāgata arises in the world. Among the bodhisattvas, he fully and truly reveals this great treasury of **absolute** qualities **that abides within oneself and all others**. These bodhisattvas too become devoted to that great

treasure of qualities, and they dig it up. For that reason, they are known in the world as tathāgatas, arhats, completely perfected buddhas. Becoming like the great treasure **that they have obtained**, they teach sentient beings many different kinds of reasonings and examples [regarding it] that they did not have before. They also teach [many] different actions and reasonings about action that are means of attaining that great treasure of qualities. Possessing the courage of non-attachment, they become donors to others of that treasury of great treasure. They themselves become treasuries of the powers and fearlessnesses and the many other buddha qualities.

Children of noble family, in that way, tathāgatas, arhats, completely perfected buddhas see with the completely pure tathāgata eye that all sentient beings possess the absolute buddha essence. They teach the Dharma to bodhisattvas, in order to completely purify **incidental defilements from** that treasury of the absolute tathāgatas' pristine wisdoms, powers, fearlessnesses, and unshared buddha qualities **that abide everywhere, as pervasive as space**.

Also, *Maitreya's Sublime Continuum with Asaṅga's Commentary*, says:

The afflictive emotions that cover the treasure are like the depths of the earth. The tathāgata nature is like the treasury of jewels buried in it. When “dhātu”¹⁰ is translated as “khams,” “buddha nature,” the meaning is that the afflictions of ordinary beings exist otherwise than they do in the occasion of [enlightened] excellence. In the occasion of the absolute, these afflictions are transformed into excellence within the space of dharmadhātu.¹¹ Later ones should remember that.

As in the house of a poor man, [buried] under the earth,
An inexhaustible, precious treasure might exist;
But the man does not know **that**,¹² and also the treasure itself
Is not able to say to that **poor man**, “I am here;”

So, the precious treasure¹³ that is within the mind¹⁴
Is immaculate dharmatā, neither established nor purified. But as
that is not realized, the sufferings of that poor man,
Many and continuous, are experienced in all births.

As the precious treasure cannot say to the man,
“I, a treasure, exist,” the man is ignorant of it.
Beings are like that poor man, with the treasure¹⁵ in their
minds.
To let them attain it, authentic sages are born in the world.¹⁶

In accord with that, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, as translated by Devacandra, says:

“Blessed One, do [beings in] the twenty-five realms of cyclic existence¹⁷ have selfhood, or do they not?”

The Buddha spoke saying, ““Self,” **in this case, is the pure self of**

suchness. Its meaning is sugatagarbha. That buddha nature¹⁸ exists in all sentient beings, but it is obstructed by many kinds of afflictive emotions. While sentient beings [always] exist within that selfhood, they cannot see it.

It is like this, for example: In a poor woman's house, in a great city, there existed an inexhaustible treasure of gold; but that poor woman who was living there did not know that a treasure existed in the ground, under her house.

Then a capable person said to that woman, "A treasure exists in your house, but even you do not know that, so how could others see or know it? Since that is so, I will try to get it for you." That poor woman supplicated that excellent one [to do so]. Then **that excellent one** dug up the treasure under the poor woman's house, and [he] gave it to her. Seeing the treasure, **the poor woman** wondered at it, and she went to **that excellent one** for refuge.

Likewise, child of noble family, tathāgatagarbha exists within all sentient beings; but they simply cannot see it. They are like that poor woman with the treasure.

Child of noble family, I have purely and truly taught that tathāgatagarbha exists within all sentient beings, **as a great treasure of absolute qualities**. I taught through example how, though the poor woman had a great treasure, she did not apprehend it **in her experience, because the obscurations covering it had not been cleared away**.

Likewise, though tathāgatagarbha exists in all sentient beings, it is obscured by **many** kinds of afflictive emotions. Therefore, sentient beings cannot know or see it. The Tathāgata shows it to them; and then, rejoicing, they go to the Tathāgata for refuge....

In the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, as translated from Chinese, the same story occurs in a very extensive version:

Child of noble family, I have said that the buddha nature of sentient beings is like, for example, a precious treasure under a poor woman's house; a precious jewel on a powerful **champion's** forehead;¹⁹ and a universal monarch's spring of sweet, life-giving water, [in the desert of saṃsāric existence].

Also, the *Dhāraṇī of Entering into the Non-conceptual* says:

Children of noble family, it is like this, for example: Under rock that is only hard and solid, exists a great treasure. It is filled with a variety of very precious, luminous, wish-fulfilling, valuable substances; such as precious silver, precious gold, and different kinds of precious jewels.

Then some people come there wanting that great treasure. A person who knows about that great treasure through higher perception

says, “Listen here. Under this rock that is only hard and solid exists a great treasure, replete with luminous, precious substances. Under them, is a further treasure of precious wish-fulfilling jewels.

Therefore, first of all, dig up everything with the nature of stones. When you have dug those out, stones that seem to be silver will appear to you. Do not perceive these as the great treasure. With full knowledge of this, dig further. As you dig, stones that seem to be gold will appear to you. Do not perceive these as the great treasure. With full knowledge of this, dig further. As you dig, stones that appear to be various jewels will appear to you. These too you should not perceive as the great treasure. With full knowledge of this too, dig further.

Listen here! When you people have made such efforts, without any further effort and activity of digging, you will see a great treasure of wish-fulfilling jewels. When this great, precious treasure of wish-fulfilling jewels is found, you will be rich. You will have great enjoyment of great wealth. You will have the power to benefit both yourselves and others.

Children of noble family, to understand the meaning of what was said there, regarding **incidental defilements and sugatagarbha**, [you] should interpret this example **of the great treasure and its coverings** in the following way:

“Rock that is only hard and solid” is a verbal designation for **obscurations** of afflictive emotions and **knowables**. By these, beings abide completely under the influence of a [seemingly] separate **grasper and grasped. The meaning for later ones is as explained.**

“Great treasure of wish-fulfilling gems underneath it” is a verbal designation for the dhātu of complete non-conception.

“People who want a precious treasure of wish-fulfilling jewels” is a verbal designation for bodhisattva great beings.

“Person who knows about the great treasure through higher perception” is a verbal designation for a tathāgata, an arhat, a completely perfected buddha.

“Rock” is a verbal designation for concretely fixated characteristics of conceptualized natures.

“Digging” is a verbal designation for abandoning [attached] mental engagement. **This is accomplished through meditative absorption that unifies the meditations of śamatha and vipaśyanā.**

“Stones that appear to be silver” is a verbal designation for conceptualized characteristics of antidotes.

“Stones that appear to be gold” is a verbal designation for conceptualized characteristics of emptiness, **suchness**, and similar terms.

“Stones that appear to be various jewels” is a verbal designation for conceptualized notions of attaining **the fruition**.

“Finding the great treasure of precious wish-fulfilling jewels” is a verbal designation for truly encountering **and attaining** the completely non-conceptual space of the dhātu.

Children of noble family, entering into the completely non-conceptual space of the dhātu should be understood by that example being presented in that way.

This is extensively taught there, and so forth. You should definitely consult the extensive presentations of these teachings that are found in those precious sūtras and profound commentaries on them, **like the root verses of the Sublime Continuum with [Asaṅga’s] Commentary**.

3. **A Brief Teaching of the Ground, Path, and Fruition of the Two Kāyas**

The non-conceptual nature of phenomena that is the luminous space of the dhātu [of the absolute], as described above, is also [called] the natural enlightened family.

The developing enlightened family depends on the natural one. It [consists of] special virtues that are genuinely received from planting and cultivating [relative] seeds of liberation. That [process] **newly** produces the form kāyas of a tathāgata, **which did not previously exist before**. Like **new** creation of an auspicious, heavenly wish-fulfilling tree **that did not previously exist**, this is production of the relative aspect of the excellent, perfect fruition.

These two kinds of enlightened family, [natural and developed,] have the [respective] natures of the two truths, [absolute and relative. Respectively] existing and not existing within the way things are, they constitute the ground. From this [basis], by practicing the path of the two accumulations of merit and pristine wisdom, the two-fold fruition **that is revealed through separation** of the two obscurations is attained. [That fruition consists of:]

1. **absolute** dharmakāya
2. **relative** form kāyas.

The Sublime Continuum of the Great Vehicle says:

As being like a treasure and a fruit tree,
The two enlightened families should be known;
That abiding without beginning, as the innate nature of things,
Which is the enlightened family of the absolute nature;
And the excellent one that is genuinely received,
That consists of special incidental virtues,
Which is the developed enlightened family.

It is said that from these two enlightened families
The three kāyas of a buddha are to be attained.
By the first pure family, the first kāya of the essence,

And by the second family having being completed,
the latter two kāyas, those of form, are to be attained.

Also, [Maitreya's] *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras*, a text of the Greater Madhyamaka, says:

As the natural and the developed enlightened families,
These are the supporting **nature** and supported **developing from it**.
The natural family, the way things are, is innately existent;
And the developed is not, in the natural way things are.

The commentary explains that the [eternal] cause of development exists [absolutely], while the [developed] fruition does not. This has been a brief summary of them, for the time being.

I.

Part One

Ground

B. **The Extensive Explanation of the Individual Aspects of the Ground, Path, and Fruition**

1. **The Way of Abiding from the Beginning of the Ground, Absolute Buddhahood.**

a. **The Teaching of the Fundamental Nature of Phenomena that is the Pristine Wisdom of the All Ground.**

Now there will be an extensive explanation of these points of the ground, path, and fruition. Within these, the ultimate, buddhadharmakāya, tathāgatagarbha, the absolute, luminous dharmadhātu, self-arising pristine wisdom, partless and pervasively omnipresent great bliss, is taught to be the ground and abiding place of all phenomena.

It is taught to be the ground of true reality that is empty of all [relative] phenomena, [hence] the solitary ground, and the ground that is pure of all defilements.

However, it is also taught to possess the [buddha] qualities of dharmakāya that are inseparable from its nature, transcending [in number] the grains of sand in the river Ganges.

b. **Well Establishing [These Teachings] by Completely Correct Scripture**

(1). **How All the Deities of Inseparable Space and Awareness Abide, Pervading the Animate and Inanimate**

(a). **How Causal Characteristics are Taught [in the Vehicle] of the Perfections**

As the ground is explained, with citations drawn from sūtra, in the *Commentary on the Sublime Continuum*:

The space of the dhātu, from beginningless time,
Is the place of all phenomena.

Because it exists, all transmigrations,
As well as final nirvāṇa, are attained.

How so? Does [dharmadhātu] exist from beginningless time? This citation teaches and posits that no previous limit [to existence] is observed, from the perspective of tathāgatagarbha. Regarding the space of the dhātu, it is said in the *Śrīmāla-devī Sūtra*:

“Blessed One, this absolute, tathāgatagarbha, is the element²⁰ of phenomena that are naturally world-transcending. It is the element of phenomena that are naturally, completely pure.”

It is also said **there** to be the place and way of abiding of all phenomena, [worldly and world transcending alike]:

“Blessed One, for that reason, tathāgatagarbha is the place, ground, and support of **absolute** phenomena **transcending [in number] the grains of sand in the river Ganges**. These are connected **as a single selfhood**, free from **division into different essences**, inseparable, and uncompounded.

Blessed One, tathāgatagarbha is also the place, ground, and support of [relative] phenomena that are not connected **into a single selfhood**, are divided, are separable, and are compounded. **For the first, support and supported are not different, but for the second they are.**

Regarding, “all transmigrations...are attained,” the same text says:

“Blessed One, since tathāgatagarbha exists, there is verbal imputation of it **by those who have incidental defilements in cyclic existence** as “saṃsāra.”

That is taught. As for nirvāṇa also being attained, it says there:

“Blessed One, if tathāgatagarbha did not exist, we would not be saddened by saṃsāra, and we would not desire, strive for, and aspire to nirvāṇa.”

That too is extensively taught. Also, the *Sublime Continuum* says:

As the entire world, all that is compounded,
Arises in space and also is destroyed in space;
So, in the uncompounded, absolute space of the dhātu,
The skandhas, dhātus, and sources²¹ arise and are destroyed.

Just as space, until now,
Has never been burned by fires;
Likewise, this absolute, sugatagarbha, is not burned
By the [destructive] fires of sickness, death, and old age.

Earth abides in water, water in wind, and wind in space;²²
But space does not abide in a causal relationship
With the element of wind and those of water and earth.

Likewise, the skandhas, powers of sense, and constituents
Abide in a causal relationship with karma and the afflictions.

Karma and the afflictions, not as they should be,²³
Always have a causal relation with mental engagements.
Conceptual mental engagements, not as they should be,
Fully abide in conceptionless purity of mind,²⁴
Pure and absolute mind that is naturally luminous.

In the nature of mind, which is also luminous,
As the absolute nature of phenomena,
no relative dharmas abide in a manner of causal relation. ...²⁵

So, it is extensively taught. A sūtra cited in *Asaṅga's Commentary* says,
also citing the analogy of earth, water, and so forth, abiding in space:

Likewise, the [five] skandhas, [eighteen sense] constituents, and
[twelve sense-]sources fully abide within karma and the afflictive
emotions. Karma and the afflictive emotions fully abide within
[conceptual], mental engagement that is not as it should be.
[Conceptual,] mental engagement that is not as it should be fully
abides within **pervasive**, completely pure **dharmatā**. [**Dharmatā** is
not causally related [to the other factors] at all. Therefore, the
nature of mind is **pure and** luminous, **from the beginning**. Though
incidental afflictive emotions **abide** in close proximity with
dharmatā, it is said that **the essence, with its luminous nature**, is not
afflicted. ...

Also, the *Sūtra on the Densely Arrayed Realm*²⁶ says:

The **suchness** of levels of the absolute,
The ground of all **saṃsāra and nirvāṇa**,
[Abides in the form of] self-risen pristine wisdom.
The goodness of sugatagarbha is that itself.
The tathāgatas have taught [the essence], sugatagarbha,
By the [mere conventional] words “the ground of all.”
Though sugatagarbha is called the ground of all,
Those of weak intelligence do not know this.²⁷

Also:

The essence that is proclaimed as the ground of all
Is not an object of conceptual mind.
When the natural state **beyond analysis**
Is analyzed, its nature cannot be analyzed.
This **changeless** nature that is completely established
Is always seen by those with **excellent** yoga,
With power over the winds and conceptual mind,
Through cessation of [karmic] winds²⁸ and conceptual mind.

By the profound ultimate thus being clearly taught, it certainly comes to be truly viewed. Here dharmadhātu itself, in which all the levels of the absolute are complete, is taught also to be the all ground, sugatagarbha, and absolute goodness. The levels of the absolute are taught extensively in the *Tantra of the Ornament of the Vajra Essence*, the *Accomplishment of Supreme Changeless Pristine Wisdom*, and the great commentaries by Nāropāda.²⁹

These levels are taught in abridged form in *Expressing the Absolute Names* of Mañjuśrī and other texts, as “holding the twelve kinds of purity,” “possessing the twelve kinds of true points,” and so forth. However, these levels are apprehendable only [in experience] through the extraordinary oral instructions of the absolute.

The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* says that the pristine wisdom of the all ground is absolute goodness, [transcending concept]:

Sugatagarbha, [with its] goodness,
Is not within the scope of logicians.³⁰

And:

The nature of absolute mind is luminosity,
That is sugatagarbha, [with its] goodness.

There, and so forth, the [basic] goodness of suchness is taught. Also, it is said in *Expressing the Names of Mañjuśrī*:

“Well known as auspicious and renowned as good;”

And in the Sublime Continuum:

“Contained in the covering sheath of ignorance, and so forth, is the good dhātu of dharmas.”

Also, the exponent of Greater Madhyamaka, the venerable noble one Asaṅga, says:

What is absolute goodness? It is suchness.

That is taught in his *Abhidharma[samuccaya]*. Also, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* teaches extensively that sugatagarbha is the [fundamentally] good buddha nature:

Child of noble family, I say that even those who have committed transgressions of the four root downfalls, those who have perverse cravings, those who deprecate the very extensive sūtras, and those who have performed the evil deeds with immediate retribution,³¹ have buddha nature; since they have suchness. The [deeds that] those sentient beings have performed may lack virtuous qualities, but their buddha nature is unperformed goodness....

Also:

Child of noble family, the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra teaches extensively that sugatagarbha is the [fundamentally] good buddha nature:

Child of noble family, I say that even those who have committed transgressions of the four root downfalls, those who have perverse cravings, those who disparage the very extensive sūtras, and those who have performed the evil deeds of immediate retribution have buddha nature – **because they have suchness.**

The Tathāgata is fully, completely enlightened in regard to that. He has fully comprehended it. When this was fully comprehended, by the Tathāgata becoming fully and completely enlightened, it was spoken. It was elucidated. It was expressed. It was commented on. It was discriminated. It was clarified. It was correctly taught.

There, and so forth, this is extensively taught. Also, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* says:

Mahāmāti, the nature of phenomena that I, Śākyamuni, and these other tathāgatas comprehended, the ground – changeless, suchness, pure reality, and the truth of phenomena – exists always and everywhere.

Many other sūtras of the Greater Madhyamaka teach like this, again and again, **that the space of the dhātu that is inseparable from enlightened awareness, dharmakāya, exists always and everywhere.** The *Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra* says:

Children of noble family, this **sugatagarbha** is the dharmatā of dharmas.³² Whether or not tathāgatas arise **in the world, as form kāyas,** all these sentient beings always possess tathāgatagarbha.

The ground and basis of all phenomena, dharmadhātu, has many synonyms; sugatagarbha, suchness, and so forth; These and other [texts] teach that it always abides pervading everything, in its three occasions:

1. In the occasion of impurity, due to defilements, it [abides as] the ground of the defilements [due to which beings] remain in conventional existence.
2. In the occasion of both purity and impurity, when impurity is purified, it [abides as] the ground of purifying impurity.
3. In the occasion of complete and total purity, it [abides as] the ground of purity from defilements.

(b). **How the Characteristics of the Fruition are Taught in Profound Secret Mantra**

The glorious *Hevajra Tantra* says that the **naturally luminous** mind of sentient beings is **absolute** buddhahood. However, it is obscured by incidental defilements. **Until these are cleared away, buddhahood is not attained.** Clearing away **all these incidental defilements** is **attainment of buddhahood.** [Without the notes:]

Sentient beings are buddhahood itself;
 However, they are obscured by incidental defilements.
 When these are cleared away, then they are [actual] buddhas.

And:

From [what they are] themselves and realizing that,
 As for sentient beings who are not really buddhas,
 That is, who are not possessors of buddha nature,
 Even one being such as that does not exist.

Hell beings, hungry ghosts, as well as animals,
 Gods, and jealous gods, as well as human beings,
 Worms in excrement and other [lowly life-forms],
 Although they do not know the [temporary] bliss
 Of gods and jealous gods;³³ they always have a nature
 That abides in bliss, innate within the essence.

Therefore, all beings always have
 the essence of buddhahood; and so,
 Nowhere in the realm of the world,
 Are other buddhas to be found,
 Aside from the absolute buddhahood
 That is the nature of sentient beings.

Primordial, pure luminosity,
 Mind is perfect buddhahood.
 No other Buddhas are taught,
 Aside from the essence of mind,
 dharmakāya and sugatagarbha.³⁴

There, and so forth, the luminous nature of mind within all sentient beings is taught to be buddhahood. That buddhahood is attained merely by that luminous mind being separated from all its incidental defilements. Also, it says there:

Great wisdom abides in the body **naturally.**
As it completely abandons all concepts **by its nature,**
 Abandonment of these [concepts] is forever complete.

Since it is omnipresent, excluding nothing at all,
 It abides not only in the bodies of beings,
 It is a pervader of all and everything.
 Though abiding in the body, it is not produced by the body.

Since the unconditioned does not rise from anything,
 Distinguished respectively as conditioned and unconditioned,

Body and self³⁵ cannot be aspects of one thing.

There it is taught that [absolute], self-arising pristine wisdom, sugatagarbha, abides **pervasively** within the [relative] bodies of all sentient beings. However, it does not abide there as any [relative] thing at all.³⁶ Also, the glorious Saṃputa says:

From the beginning, the **absolute** Buddha dwells in our minds.
There is no absolute buddha anywhere else but there.
Those who are obscured by the darkness of unknowing
Confusedly want a buddha other than that in their own bodies,³⁷
Because they lack realization of that luminous nature.

The **self-arising**, great wisdom that abandons all concepts
Abides within the body of every sentient being.
Though it abides in the body, it does not arise from the body.
The [eternal] essence transcends the interdependent arising
Of momentary³⁸ phenomena, within the relative.

Also, the *Vajra Garland Tantra*, an explanatory tantra for the glorious *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, says:

In this body of the vajra masters,³⁹
Abide the respective bodies of the conquerors.
The first, the body vajra, **Vairocana**,⁴⁰
Abides as the actual skandha known as form,
As pure perception of that **relative** class.

Desire-Vajra, who is Ratnasambhava,⁴¹
Pervades the **relative** skandha known as feeling.
The vajra of conquerors' speech, who is Amitābha,⁴²
Pervades the skandha of conditioned perception.

The vajra of offering, who is **Amoghasiddhi**,⁴³
Pervades the **relative** skandha of formations.
The vajra of blessed victors' minds, **Akṣobhya**,⁴⁴
Pervades the **relative** skandha known as consciousness.

Again, as flesh, and so forth, **relative** earth,
Abides the consort bhagavatī Locanā.⁴⁵
In blood, and so forth, the element of water,
Abides the consort bhagavatī Māmakī.

In warmth, and so forth, the element of fire,
Abides the consort Pāṇḍaravāsini.⁴⁶
In motion, and so forth, the element of wind,
Abides the consort bhagavatī Tārā.⁴⁷

In the two sense powers of the eyes,
There abides the tathāgata Kṣitigarbha.⁴⁸
In the two sense powers of the ears,
There abides the tathāgata Vajrapāṇi.⁴⁹

Residing in the sense power of the nose,
 There is the tathāgata Akāśagarbha.⁵⁰
 Residing in the sense power of the tongue,
 There is the tathāgata Lokeśvara.⁵¹

In the bundle with the nature of the four elements,
 That is labeled with the name “the body;”⁵²
 There abides the tathāgata who is known
 As Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin.⁵³

Residing in the power of the mental sense,
 Is the tathāgata who is known as Mañjuśrī.⁵⁴
 Residing in all the different joints of the body,
 Is the tathāgata Samantabhadra.

In all the nerves and veins within the body,
 There is the tathāgata Maitreya.
 At the lower part of the right hand,
 Is the tathāgata Yamāntaka.⁵⁵

At the lower part of the left hand,
 Is the tathāgata Aparājita.⁵⁶
 Residing in the lotus of the mouth,
 Is the tathāgata Hayagrīva.⁵⁷

The tathāgata in the secret place,
 Is the one known as Amṛitakuṇḍalī.⁵⁸
 Residing in the shoulder to the right,
 Is the tathāgata known as Acala.⁵⁹

Residing in the shoulder to the left,
 Is the tathāgata known as Rāgarāja.
 Residing in the knee on the right side,
 Is the tathāgata known as Hiranyanila.⁶⁰

Residing in the knee of the left side,
 Is the tathāgata known as Mahābala.⁶¹
 Residing at the crown on top of the head,
 Is the tathāgata known as Cakravartin.⁶²

Residing underneath the pair of feet,
 Is the tathāgata known as Sumbha.⁶³
 In all [of the different parts of] this very body,⁶⁴
 All the above tathāgatas abide.

There, and so forth, it is taught how the absolute father and mother victorious ones, conquerors’ children, wrathful kings, and other deities abide within your body.

(2). **How What Abides in This Way is Itself All of the Three Jewels of the Absolute Nature of Phenomena**

Here it must be realized that even the absolute children of the victorious ones and others who appear as the Saṅgha jewel are actual buddhas in essence. Moreover, all the absolute three jewels are all that single essence. Intending these points, the *Chapter on Firm Noble Intention* says:

Ānanda, the **ultimate, absolute** Tathāgata is not demonstrable.
It cannot be seen with the eye.
Ānanda, the **ultimate, absolute** Dharma is inexpressible.
It cannot be heard with the ear.
Ānanda, the **ultimate, absolute** Saṅgha is unapprehendable.
It cannot be revered with body and mind.

Also, the *Vajra Garland Tantra* says, with notes **entirely explaining these verses in terms of the two truths**:

Primordially undefiled, **luminous** mind is the **absolute** Buddha.
The **jewel of absolute** Dharma is correctly spoken in speech.⁶⁵
That **naturally luminous** kāya is called⁶⁶ the **absolute** Saṅgha,
As it is the place of residing of the bodhisattva assembly.

The **absolute** Buddha is said to be the syllable HŪM.⁶⁷
The syllable ĀḤ⁶⁸ speaks **absolute** speech, **the holy Dharma**,
The absolute Saṅgha is the absolute syllable OM,⁶⁹
Which has an essence that [always] radiates total **light**.

The **absolute** buddha is the **absolute** avadhūtī.
The **absolute** Dharma is the **absolute** lalanā.
The **absolute** Saṅgha is the **absolute** rasanā.
These **absolute** three **channels and jewels** are so described.

The **absolute** formless realm is, [in essence,] the **absolute** Buddha.
The **absolute** realm of form is, [in essence,] the **absolute** Dharma.
The **absolute** realm of desire is, [in essence,] the **absolute** Saṅgha.
Thus, these three-fold realms have a superior character.⁷⁰

That which is **sugatagarbha**, aside from your own **great** life,⁷¹
Within the three realms of existence⁷² is nowhere [to be found].
It is never explained as other than or outside that,
As dharmas, aside from dharmadhātu, are natureless.
The three-fold realm, [whose cause is] the [karmic] winds of illusion,
Is seen as being like a dream within a dream.

The **absolute** essence of the three realms is suchness alone.⁷³
When pristine wisdom arises, that is quickly seen.
When we have [so] blessed ourselves, [all] exists as suchness.
Siddhi having the three worlds'⁷⁴ aspects is quickly gained.

The **absolute** Buddha is **absolute** sambhogakāya.⁷⁵
The **absolute** Dharma is also **absolute** dharmakāya.⁷⁶
The **absolute** Saṅgha is **absolute** nirmāṇakāya.⁷⁷
The **absolute** three kāyas have these three-fold natures.

Regarding appearance, attainment, and increase of the absolute:

Appearance of the absolute is the form of the Buddha
 Absolute Dharma⁷⁸ is attainment of such appearance.
 The absolute Saṅgha⁷⁹ is the increase of such appearance.
 [The Buddha] is characterized by these three [aspects] of
 appearance.

The glorious *Samvarodaya Tantra*, [from the Cakrasaṃvara cycle,] says:

The absolute Buddha, as well as the absolute Dharma and Saṅgha,
 Though they are one, are designated as being three;
 With the natures of three kinds of **absolute** refuge and suchness,
 There are three kinds of **absolute** kāya and liberation,⁸⁰
 Three kinds of **absolute** faces,⁸¹ syllables, and deities.⁸²
 They have the nature of the three realms **of the absolute**,
 With three kinds of maṇḍalas,⁸³ and also three kinds of yoga,⁸⁴
 Taught as the three-fold path **of the three absolute vehicles**,⁸⁵
 With three kinds of samaya,⁸⁶ and also three kinds of virtue.⁸⁷
 They are also **vajra** body, speech, and mind,
 Vajra prajñā and also [vajra] skillful means,
 Totaling three combined, with the union of those two.
 It is the seer of the three secrets⁸⁸ as they are.
 From the triangular nature of the source of dharmas,
 By the yoga of having no concept of the three spheres of action,⁸⁹
 It has the natures of the three mantras⁹⁰ **of the three vajras**,
 And those of the three-fold channels⁹¹ **of the vajra body**.

There, and so forth, it is taught how absolute sugatagarbha itself is the
 three refuges, principles, kāyas, liberations,⁹² faces, deities, realms of
 dharmatā, maṇḍalas, **roots**, and so forth.

The ultimate three jewels are all one and the same. These absolute three
 jewels are all dharmadhātu, the ground of emptiness. **The relative three
 jewels are the very well-known** relative Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha. If
 you know that **these many sets of three jewels, realms, deities, and so
 forth**, have dual aspects within the indivisible two truths;⁹³ you will not be
 confused by the Sage's Word. Likewise, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

Because the buddha nature **that is always the natural suchness of
 buddhahood** is uncompounded, it is said to be permanent. **As the
 [space of] dharmatā [adorned by] 'other,' phenomena**, "space," is
 Buddha nature. Buddha nature is the Tathāgata. **The Tathāgata is
 dharmakāya**. The Tathāgata is uncompounded. The uncompounded
Tathāgata is permanent. The permanent **Buddha** is the Dharma. The
 Dharma is the Saṅgha. The **absolute** Saṅgha is uncompounded, and
 the uncompounded is permanent.

And:

Child of noble family, always be mindful and diligent with regard to
 the **absolute** Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha. These three aspects of
 absolute Dharma⁹⁴ have the characteristics of not being different,⁹⁵

impermanent, and changeable. Those who perceive this three-fold Dharma of the absolute three jewels as different are said not to abide in the [absolute] three refuges and [proper] Dharma discipline. They cannot attain even the enlightenment of Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. However, those who always perceive and act diligently with regard to this inconceivable space of the dhātu, the absolute three jewels, are themselves the absolute objects of refuge.

For example, child of noble family, by the condition of a tree existing, protecting shade exists. Tathāgatas are also like that. By existing as the permanent Dharma, they are objects of refuge. What is impermanent cannot be permanent, supreme refuge. If someone says, “The Tathāgata is impermanent,” [such a statement entails that] the Tathāgata is not an object of [absolute] refuge, for the world together with its gods.

Also:

“Primordial, utter peace” is true, complete liberation.
Primordial true, liberation is the [absolute] Tathāgata.
The “absolute tathāgata” is also the absolute Dharma.

And:

No matter who says, “the Tathāgata is different from the Dharma and Saṅgha,” these three are not the three-fold object of [absolute] refuge.

Also, the *Sublime Continuum* says:

In the absolute sense, the refuge of beings
Consists exclusively of the Buddha himself;
Because the Sage possesses the dharmakāya,⁹⁶
And also, he is the ultimate goal of the Saṅgha.

That has the same meaning as what was taught above.

(3). **How Many Examples and Their Meanings Teach that Just That is Sugatagarbha**

Also:

The afflictions that cover over the buddha nature of beings,
Unrelated⁹⁷ with the essence, abide beginninglessly.⁹⁸
The undefiled nature of mind, luminous sugatagarbha,
Is also said to be beginningless, like space....

Also:

Beginning from the divisions of the three occasions of suchness
Of common beings, noble children⁹⁹ and perfect buddhas;
The Buddha, perceiving suchness, taught to sentient beings,
This essence of conquerors, in which they all abide.

Also, on that topic, what is the meaning of teaching that all sentient beings possess tathāgatagarbha, even though their suchness abides combined with defilements?

Because the perfect buddha kāya can manifest,¹⁰⁰
 Because **the essence of** suchness¹⁰¹ is inseparable,
 And because they have that family;¹⁰² all embodied beings
 Always have the essence of perfect buddhahood....

The *Perfection Prajñā Sūtra in One Hundred Fifty Stanzas* says:

Since dharmatā is the nature of all **dharma**s, all sentient beings possess tathāgatagarbha. Since they are all empowered by the **pervasive** vajra essence, all sentient beings possess the **absolute, indestructible** vajra essence. Since all speech¹⁰³ of the nature of phenomena is self-arising, **and it does not arise causally from anything else**, all sentient beings possess the **absolute** vajra essence.

(4). **It is Taught How that That Itself is Synonymous with the Naturally Abiding Enlightened Family**

Asaṅga's Commentary on the Sublime Continuum, [a text] of the Greater Madhyamaka, says that the completely pure, natural enlightened family **is** the Tathāgata nature. With the intention that the [natural] enlightened family is that absolute space itself, it says:

Just as, in ore that is little grains of stone,
 Masses of pure, refined gold are not to be seen;
 But they are seen when the ore is completely refined;
 So, in the world, is the **absolute** Tathāgata.¹⁰⁴

And:

The enlightened family that exists **in everyone** is naturally, completely pure. It is never proper for it to be impure in itself. Therefore, the Blessed One said [the following words], with the intention that the enlightened family exists in all sentient beings, without distinction, in a way suitable for their attaining its complete purity from incidental defilements:

Though **incidental defilements are** beginningless,
 they end, through meditation on the excellent path.
 That which, by nature, always has the qualities
 of being pure and luminous, the essence, sugatagarbha,
 Is obscured by a covering **of incidental defilements**;
 And so is not seen, like the hidden golden image.¹⁰⁵

It is as taught there – Sugatagarbha is also the enlightened family that is by nature completely pure.

(5). **How Just That has the Same Meaning as the Classifications of Families Taught in the Tantra Collections**

Moreover, that enlightened family is taught to be the ever-unbroken nature of the three, five, and so forth, families [of tantra,] whose reality is the continuity of dharmatā. The glorious *Guhyasamāja* says:

Family is unbroken continuity.¹⁰⁶
 Continuity is the first, or original, buddha.
 That which does not arise and is not destroyed
 Is said to be that lord, **great** Vajradhara.

Also:

Tantra, **in the profound mantra vehicle**, is said to be **absolute**,
 unbreakable continuity.

Also:

Its families are five and three,¹⁰⁷
 And, in essence, a hundred families. ...¹⁰⁸

Also, the glorious *Hevajra Tantra* says:

The families¹⁰⁹ were those of the six victorious ones.¹¹⁰
 By abbreviation of those, there were only five.¹¹¹
 Later, by the divisions of body, speech, and mind;
 These were further abbreviated into three.¹¹²

They have been spoken of as families,
 By the counting up of many divisions
 Of absolute families that have the natures
 Of the five skandhas and the five elements.¹¹³

Also:

The one great mind that is the **absolute mind**,
 Is symbolized in the form of five families.
 From those same five families of deities,
 There has been the arising of many thousands.¹¹⁴

Therefore, these¹¹⁵ all have a single nature,
Innate great bliss, supremely beneficial.
 By their being divided into five **fathers and mothers**,
 There are five minds of **absolute** passion, and so forth.¹¹⁶

In one family, hosts of tathāgatas,¹¹⁷
 As many as the sands of ten Ganges Rivers,
 Are many families, hosts of families,¹¹⁸
 And, in those, many hundreds of families.

In each of those, are a hundred thousand great families,
 And, in those families, countless families,
 Arising from the one¹¹⁹ of the highest joy.

Also, the *Tantra of the Correct Expression of Mañjuśrī's Absolute Names* says:

All the great families of secret mantra,
And, among them, the vidyā mantra¹²⁰ holders' family,
And the three families that are completely seen,

The worldly and world-transcending families,
Are the great family illuminating the world.
This is the highest lineage, mahāmudrā,
And the great family of the great uṣṇiṣa.

Explaining the meaning of these families, the glorious *Kālacakra Tantra* says:

The great family of the great uṣṇiṣa is the five topics of the **changeless, great emptiness**.¹²¹ The three families that are completely seen are those of the body vajra, OM, the speech vajra, A, and the mind vajra, HŪM. The vowels A, and so forth, **I, RI, U, Ī, I** are the **mahāmudrā** families of the five supreme victorious ones.¹²²

The KA class, and so forth,¹²³ with HA YA RA WA LA KŚA, **as the thirty-six tantric deities of the six [classes of] consonants**, are the great, world-illuminating families. [Each consonant is made into twelve syllables,] by having [one of] the twelve vowels abiding as the life [of the resulting syllable]. Multiplied by [combination with] the five HA YA RA WA LA, they make sixty.

The thirty consonants, multiplied by the twelve vowels, make 360. Multiplied by three, for the quality and increase consonants and the changing, *a ṇar bsgyur* letters,¹²⁴ there are 1,080 worldly and world transcending families, **so it is said**.

The lords of vidyā [mantra] holders are KA, and so forth, with all **five letters of each of the six consonant classes** stacked, the class **LA WA RA YA HA** stacked, and the class **LA WA RA YA KŚA** stacked. **These comprise eight absolute classes**.

Likewise:

Of the six families of the **unpronounceable**¹²⁵ **absolute** classes KA, and so forth, completely set out in order:

1. **the KA class is the vajra family,**
2. **the CA class is the sword family,**
3. **the ṬA class is the jewel family,**
4. **the TA class is the wheel family,**
5. **the PA class is the water lily, or padma, family, and likewise,**
6. **the SA class is the hooked knife family.**

These six classes are the six families of the six victorious ones. Each class is further multiplied by the five divisions of [each class, as the] **absolute syllables of the** supreme conquerors.¹²⁶ Since the absolute expressed [deities] and expressing [syllables] are inseparable, **the deities are multiplied by the divisions of the syllables**.¹²⁷

There, and so forth, for these naturally pure families, many [ways of] dividing are taught.

Referring to the **absolute** five families it says, “having five faces and five knotted locks.” Referring to the **absolute** six families, it says “the terrifying six-faced wrathful king.” Referring to the **absolute** one hundred families, it says “hundred faced Halāhala.”

Those families are taught by those phrases. Also, the emanation of exalted Avalokiteśvara, [Kalki Puṇḍarīka,] says:

Here in the king of tantras, the Kālacakra, the three-faced [principal deity] with the nature of **absolute** body, speech, and mind is presented as having the nature of three **absolute** lineages.

A four-faced [deity] with the nature of **absolute** body, speech, mind, and pristine wisdom is also presented. With the three families, together with the one family of the nature, this tantra is presented as having the nature of four families. **That accords with there being three occasions for children up to age fifteen, and four after the age of sixteen.**¹²⁸

Likewise, the nature is presented as having five families. These five, together with the one family of the nature, are the six families of the nature. **That accords with there being five elements for children up to age fifteen, and six after age sixteen, including the pristine wisdom element.**¹²⁹

It is taught there, and so forth. Also, the *Kālacakra Tantra, the Supreme First Buddha* says:

The tantra¹³⁰ of the great vajra holders [and consorts] ¹³¹
Is itself the tathāgata family.¹³²
That is also the excellent vajra family.¹³³
That is also the excellent padma family.¹³⁴
That is also the excellent ratna family.¹³⁵
These are all absolute passion free from attachment.¹³⁶

Also, the *Vajra Garland Tantra* says:

In the root tantra, it is clearly taught
That, when the divisions of families are summarized,
Then the number of families is five....

The *Supreme First Buddha* says:

Within the absolute ground of emptiness,
There are three families and five families –
A single nature, with a hundred families.

By what is said there, and so forth, it should be understood that all the classifications of families taught in the profound tantra collections are divisions of the single, natural enlightened family, rather than divisions of the developed enlightened family.

Objection: Maitreya's *Ornament of Clear Realization* says:

Since dharmadhātu is without divisions,
Different families are not suitable.

There it says that different divisions of the natural enlightened family are unsuitable. Doesn't what you say contradict that?

Answer: It does not. The intention of that saying is that there is no difference in the essence itself. However, even though the essence is inseparably one, various divisions of families are taught in the profound tantras, because the essence has various aspects. There is no contradiction in that at all. A passage from the *Jewel Heap Sūtra* that is cited in Bhāvaviveka's *Lamp of Prajñā*, his commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Root Verses on the Middle Way*, says:

That in which actions are non-existent and the effects of actions are non-existent is the family of noble ones. Within that family, no actions of body are done. No actions of speech are done. No actions of mind are done.

There the intention is that uncompounded, [changeless, absolute] dharmadhātu is the ground of absence of [all relative] actions and their effects. The meaning of the natural enlightened family taught in the profound sūtras and tantras is indeed one as naturally luminous suchness, tathāgatagarbha, and the pristine wisdom of dharmadhātu.

However, among the phenomena that are its particular aspects, qualities, and so forth, differences of [relative] delusion and [absolute] non-delusion [and the respective presence and absence of change through action] are taught to exist.

This kind of oral instructions flies upward into the sky that is the intention of all the profound tantra collections, viewing it from on high. **It is good if that is always kept in mind.**

(6). **How Just That Abides as the Continuity of the Profound Nature of Phenomena and the Vajra Family**

The natural enlightened family is also the [absolute] continuum of inseparable emptiness and compassion. Just that always abides as the ground of all phenomena. That causal continuum¹³⁷ is taught to be the vajra family. Moreover, in the first of the two divisions of the glorious *Hevajra Tantra*, the *Vajra Family Chapter*, it says:

The syllable HE is that of the great compassion.¹³⁸
The sense of "vajra" is superior knowing.¹³⁹

Listen while I explain this tantra,¹⁴⁰ whose nature
Is prajñā and means **inseparably united**.

Also, the root *Hevajra Tantra* with five hundred thousand stanzas says:

This compassion has been explained to have three aspects,
With objects of beings, of Dharma, and no object.
The one described as “great” is the objectless.¹⁴¹

Regarding the four-fold joys of this, the changeless nature,
That is what is expressed by the syllable HE.¹⁴²
As the united [essence] of body, speech, and mind,¹⁴³
The previous syllable VAM is exactly that.

“Vajra” also expresses the syllable E,
Emptiness with all of the highest aspects.
“Yoga” is a term that is the expression
Of the **non-dual** union of these **two**.¹⁴⁴
Thus, this tantra having the “highest” nature of prajñā¹⁴⁵
And skillful means¹⁴⁶ is “highest yoga tantra.”

And:

The vow¹⁴⁷ of all the buddhas, **the absolute ground**,¹⁴⁸
Abides as the syllables of [that meaning]; EVAM.¹⁴⁹
Later, with a division into three families,
And with a division into five families,¹⁵⁰
And with a division into six families,¹⁵¹
And, likewise, with division into four.
Listen while I explain this tantra’s nature
Of prajñā that is in union with skillful means....

For **the absolute ground of emptiness**, the two families are those of prajñā and skillful means. The three families are those of body, speech, and mind. The four families are those of the four kāyas, vajras, and so on. Moreover, the same *Chapter on the Vajra Families* says:

The indestructible is known as “vajra.”¹⁵²
“Sattva” is the unity of the three realms.¹⁵³
By the prajñā¹⁵⁴ of this reasoning,
The name of Vajrasattva is explained.¹⁵⁵

A being abiding in enlightenment¹⁵⁶
Is therefore known by the name of bodhisattva.¹⁵⁷

One filled with the flavors of the great wisdom,
Is therefore called a mahāsattva, great being.¹⁵⁸

One who always abides within samaya
Is therefore described as being a samayasattva.¹⁵⁹

Also, the root *Hevajra Tantra* with five hundred thousand stanzas says:

What is explained as indestructible vajra

Is supremely famed as being the syllable VAM.¹⁶⁰
 Indestructible body, speech, and mind
 Are fully expressed as being this syllable VAM.

The being that is the unity of the three realms
 Has the expression of the syllable E.¹⁶¹
 Together with the E of [absolute] prajñā,¹⁶²
 VAM¹⁶³ has the nature of the three families.

The hero at the center of the navel
 In the sphere of action of secret anthers,¹⁶⁴
 Having a knowledge consort like himself,
 Is called by the designation Vajrasattva.

Explained as the first heruka with two arms,¹⁶⁵
 He is the motion of the three-fold world.
 He is designated the essence of body,¹⁶⁶
 Buddha body, abiding as the great bliss.

He is the **fourth** vajra of pristine wisdom.
 He is the innate joy of the four joys.¹⁶⁷
 He is fruition according with the cause.¹⁶⁸
 He is said to be a one-pointed vajra.¹⁶⁹

He is the fourth occasion, **the ground of** exhaustion.¹⁷⁰
 He is the completely pure, supreme, and changeless.¹⁷¹
 As whatever abides within enlightenment¹⁷²
 He abides in the heart lotus at the center.

The syllable HŪM alone is explained as sattva.¹⁷³
 Akṣobhya¹⁷⁴ is that motionlessness itself.
 That itself is said to be the mind vajra,
 Viṣṇu¹⁷⁵ as the four-armed second **heruka**.¹⁷⁶

That itself is Jvalajvala,¹⁷⁷ BHYO.
 That itself is explained as dharmakāya.
 In the heart Dharmacakra,¹⁷⁸ with a vajra,
 Holder of joy that is the special joy,¹⁷⁹
 That is said¹⁸⁰ to be the ripened **fruition**.
 Exhausting the thick sleep **of the relative**,
 These abide within the heart of the body.

Filled with the flavor of the great pristine wisdom,
 The one who is called the mahāsattva of that,
 Who is the lord of the throat enjoyment cakra,¹⁸¹
 Is the one with the name of Amitābha.

He is explained as being the vajra of speech,¹⁸²
 A tathāgata with a lotus in his hand.
 He is explained as being supreme joy,¹⁸³
 And **elsewhere** as creator of the person.¹⁸⁴

By abiding in the relative and absolute¹⁸⁵

He exhausts the occasion of dream of the relative.¹⁸⁶
 That itself becomes sambhogakāya,¹⁸⁷
 By which the buddhas teach the Buddhadharma.¹⁸⁸

That itself is called the producer of bliss.
 As the heruka Kiṭikiṭi Vajra
 With the aspect of three faces and six arms,
 He becomes the third of the herukas.¹⁸⁹
 As he always abides within samaya,
 He is the one that has been called “the abider.”

The great bliss that is abiding at the forehead¹⁹⁰
 Is the rabbit-imaged essence¹⁹¹ of samaya,¹⁹²
 The being well-abiding as amṛita,
 Completely explained as the syllable OM,

He is the one who is said to be Vairocana.¹⁹³
 That itself is called the body vajra.
 That itself is given the designation
 “Bhramā,” the holder of the body vajra.
 Joy, Bhramā’s essence, is called the kāyas of form.
 Just that is explained as the wheel holder.

Body characterized by emanation,¹⁹⁴
 Since it is reversed¹⁹⁵ is also immaculate.
 That is exhaustion of the occasion of waking.
 That becomes the deity Picu Vajra,
 Explained as a heruka with eight faces.

He is a great hero with four legs,
 And also, truly possessing sixteen arms.
 Thus, according to the divisions of body,
 He is explained as being the fourth heruka.¹⁹⁶

From having the essence,¹⁹⁷ this is dharmakāya.
 From dharmakāya, there is also enjoyment.¹⁹⁸
 From that, there is also the body of emanation,¹⁹⁹
 Thus, there is the existence of four kayas.²⁰⁰

The holder of the body vajra is Bhramā.
 The holder of the kāya of speech is Maheśvara.²⁰¹
 The holder of the kāya of mind is Viṣṇu.
 Vajrasattva is the great bliss [itself].

Also, in his commentary on the *Chapter on [the Vajra] Families*, the noble one Vajragarbha says:

The families are said to be three-fold.
 With four actions, there are four divisions.²⁰²
 The classifications of families²⁰³ is like that.
 Those who completely desire the Buddha path
 And possess the requisite yogas should know this.²⁰⁴

And:

The syllables EVAM are Vajrasattva's.²⁰⁵
 The mind vajra is the syllable HŪṂ.
 The speech vajra is the syllable ĀḤ,
 The body vajra is the syllable OM.

This is the continuum of the ground or causal continuum.²⁰⁶ It is taught to have the nature of absolute deities, like the four herukas [mentioned,] possessing the nature of four families, and so forth.

Objection: This first chapter of the Hevajra Tantra is known as the Chapter on the Fruition Continuum. It is not about the ground, which is called the "causal continuum."

Answer: As the Omniscient One calls this the Chapter on Vajra Families, it is established that he did not teach that this is the "Fruition Chapter." In any case, to teach the ground or causal continuum first is not unreasonable, *as Maitreya does in the Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras:*

Enlightened family,²⁰⁷ devotion for the Dharma,
 Likewise, generation of bodhicitta,
 Practicing [the perfection of] generosity,
 As well as entering into faultlessness,
 And completely ripening sentient beings,
 Completely purifying buddha fields,
 [Entering into] non-abiding nirvāṇa,
 Supreme enlightenment, and being a teacher....

According to Maitreya, in teaching how to encounter the path and fruition, according to the systems of the great, completely correct textual traditions, it is not unsuitable to begin with the [absolute] ground, [which is also] the [natural] enlightened family. He also says there:

That suchness abides in all saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.
 Though it is without difference, when it has been purified,²⁰⁸
 That is attainment of being a tathāgata.
 All sentient beings possess the essence of that suchness.

According to that passage, there is no fault in saying "the continuum of the ground, or cause, is also the continuum of the fruition." The intention is that the essence of the ground, the natural state, the way things are, and the essence of the fruition, [in which the buddhas manifest it,] are a single suchness. The exalted *Eight Thousand Stanza Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra* says:

The suchness of an [absolute] tathāgata is also the suchness of all [relative] phenomena. The suchness of all [relative] phenomena is also the suchness of a tathāgata....

Many sūtras like the *Extensive Mother*²⁰⁹ also say that there is no division between the suchness of buddhas and sentient beings.

(7). **How That Itself, Like Space, Abides as the Continuity of the Inseparable Essence of the Ground and Fruition**

Likewise, just that itself, the essence, the ground, the enlightened family, suchness, dharmakāya, is taught to pervade all phenomena, like space. The *Vajra Tent*²¹⁰ of the *Ḍākinīs* says:

As many as the realms of space may be,
With many thousands of world realms in every one,
Great bliss, which is the great seal²¹¹ of perfection,²¹²
The Buddha, is abiding there, like space. ...²¹³

There it says that the vajra family, the family of natural, complete purity itself is buddhahood, the inseparable ground of **emptiness** and fruition of mahāmudrā that possesses [intrinsic] perfect great bliss. That [continuum], pervading everything like space, is taught to be the ground of everything. As the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

The buddha nature of sentient beings is like space. Space is not in the past. It is not in the future. It is not in the present. It is not inside. It is not outside. It is not included within forms, sounds, tastes, smells, and touchables. Buddha nature is also like that....

Also:

Child of noble family, for example, space is not inside all sentient beings. It is not outside. It is not both inside and outside, Therefore, it has no obstruction. The buddha nature of sentient beings is also like that.

Also:

The Tathāgata, **the absolute ground of emptiness**, is unborn. It has no **conditioned** family. Since the Tathāgata is unborn and has no **conditioned** family, the Tathāgata is permanent. The phenomena of permanence, **suchness**, entirely pervade everything, just as space pervades everything.

The *Sūtra taught by Akṣayamati* also says:

The place of dharmadhātu is also the place of the nature, **element, or dhātu** of sentient beings. The place of the nature, **element, or dhātu** of sentient beings is the element of space. Therefore, all phenomena are said to be like space.

Those words teach that the ground and place of all phenomena is buddha nature, the Tathāgata's dharmakāya, and dharmadhātu, pervading everything, like space. Likewise, the *Commentary to the Sublime Continuum* says:

No sentient being in any realm of sentient beings can exist outside the Tathāgata's dharmakāya, just as forms **cannot** exist **outside of** space.

Vajragarbha's commentary says:

As when a vase is broken,
There is no breakage of space;
When the body disintegrates,
Pristine wisdom is not destroyed.

Also, the glorious *Kālacakra Tantra* says:

When the water in a vase is poured out, it leaves the vase; but the space in the vase does not also leave it. That is how **Vajradhara**, the one possessing the vajra of space that pervades space, free from any realm, abides in the midst of the body.

That **Vajradhara abides in dharmadhātu, the realm free from any [concrete] realm; because he is free from grasper and grasped,²¹⁴ is without contradiction.** Also, Maitreya's *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

Just as space is maintained always to go everywhere,
So, that too is maintained always to go everywhere.
Just as space goes into everything with form,
That too pervades the assembly of all sentient beings.

There it is taught that, **just as space is pervades everything externally, the kāya of the essence, dharmatā, pervades all sentient beings internally.** Also, the *Sūtra of the Inconceivable Secrets of the Tathāgata* says:

Śāntamati, it is like this, for example. All that appears as form abides in space. Śāntamati, likewise, the Tathāgata's all that appears as sentient beings abides in **dharmakāya**.

Śāntamati, it is like this, for example. All that appears as form is included in space. Śāntamati, likewise, all that appears as sentient beings is included in the Tathāgata's **dharmakāya**.

Also, the *Sublime Continuum* says:

Just as, by having an inconceivable nature,
Space consequently goes into everything;
The nature of mind, the undefiled, **luminous dhātu**,
Likewise, pervasively goes into everything.

As space pervades all different kinds of forms,
The lesser and intermediate, and those that are excellent;
The dhātu, characterized as universal, pervades,
Faulty forms, good qualities, and the ultimate,²¹⁵

Also:

As **uncompounded** space goes into everything,
But, because it is subtle, is never covered by faults;²¹⁶
Likewise, [the nature abiding] in sentient beings,²¹⁷
In this realm is, likewise, never covered by faults.²¹⁸

Just as all the many physical world realms
 Arise in space and are destroyed in space,²¹⁹
 In the uncompounded space of dharmadhātu,
 The **relative** senses rise and are destroyed....

Also:

The **luminous** nature of mind, like the realm of space,
 Is without causes and without conditions.
 It has no accumulation and no birth.²²⁰
 It also has no endurance and no destruction.

The nature of mind, which is very luminous,
 Resembles space in being forever changeless.
 It is never afflicted by defilements,²²¹
 Arising from [fixated] concepts of the unreal.

By those words, and so forth, suchness being like space is taught.

(8). **How That Itself Abides in the Three Occasions of Absolute Dharmakāya**

The *Sublime Continuum* teaches three occasions of dharmakāya:

It may be impure, or pure and impure,²²²
 Or it may be utterly, complete pure,
 These are said, respectively, of sentient beings,
 Of bodhisattvas, and of tathāgatas.

[*Asaṅga's*] *Commentary* says:

For the impure occasion, “the nature of sentient beings” is said, for the occasion of mixed impurity and purity, “bodhisattva,” and for the utterly and completely pure occasion, “tathāgata.” As is said:

Śāriputra, when dharmakāya is seemingly enclosed, or obscured, in a covering of limitless tens of millions of afflictive emotions, carried away by the stream of saṃsāra, whirling in cycles of birth and death, without beginning or end; it is called “the nature,²²³ of a sentient being.”

Śāriputra, that same dharmakāya is called a “bodhisattva” within those who are saddened by the suffering of the stream of saṃsāra, who are free from attachment to all objects of desire, and who practice actions to attain enlightenment that involve the eighty-four thousand heaps of phenomena associated with the ten perfections.

Śāriputra, that same dharmakāya, when it has been completely liberated from all coverings of the afflictive emotions, has passed beyond all sufferings, has been separated from all defilements of the secondary afflictive emotions, has become pure so that it abides in the completely pure, supremely pure nature of phenomena, has attained the

level supremely regarded by all sentient beings, has attained the power of a person who realizes the non-duality of all levels of knowable phenomena, so that it has the quality of non-obscurity, and has attained the power of unobstructed sovereignty over all phenomena is called a tathāgata, an arhat, a truly, completely enlightened buddha.

And:

Śāriputra, therefore, the nature of a sentient being and dharmakāya are not mutually exclusive. The nature of a sentient being itself is dharmakāya. Dharmakāya itself is the nature of a sentient being.

(9). **How That Abides as the Three Occasions of Suchness, and So Forth,**

Vasubandhu's *Extensive Commentary on the Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra in One Hundred Thousand Stanzas* says:

This text says, **as do many others that are likewise supremely exalted**, "All sentient beings have tathāgatagarbha." Therefore, all sentient beings have the nature of suchness. Suchness has three occasions:

1. an occasion of being impure
2. an occasion of being **sometimes** impure and **sometimes** pure
3. an occasion of being utterly, completely pure.

1. The impure occasion is that of all ordinary beings. As these have not **attained** the occasion of enlightenment at all, they have only the occasion of a sentient being. For them, suchness is called by the name "sentient being."

2. The occasion that is **sometimes** pure and **sometimes** impure is that of **bodhisattva** noble ones. These have the occasion of enlightenment, **manifesting to some extent, according to their level**. They also have **as much as remains of the other** occasion of a sentient being. Their suchness that is both impure and pure is called by the name "bodhisattva."

3. The occasion of utter, complete purity is the occasion of enlightened ones alone. For them, suchness is called by the name "tathāgata." As is said: "Subhūti, tathāgata, **means one who has gone, gata, to suchness, tathathā, the absolute ground of emptiness**. Therefore, **tathāgata** is a synonym of "suchness."

The same author's *Commentary on the Perfection of Prajñā Sūtras in a hundred thousand, twenty-five thousand, and eighteen thousand stanzas, Overcoming Harm to the Three Mothers*, says:

The suchness called tathāgatagarbha has three occasions. These

are:

1. the impure occasion on the level of ordinary beings
2. the occasion that is both impure and pure, on the level of bodhisattvas
3. the pure occasion on the level of tathāgatas

1. Impure suchness is called a “sentient being.” This is also called “the faultlessness of the **essence, suchness**, when it is associated with the all-encompassing, afflictive emotions,” because the afflictions do not defile the purity of suchness.

2. In the occasion that is both impure and pure, suchness is called a “bodhisattva,” because it has aspects of both the occasion of enlightenment, bodhi, and the impure occasion of a sentient being, sattva. That is also called “the faultlessness of a bodhisattva,” for the same reasons as above.

3. In the pure occasion, suchness is called a tathāgata, since, as is said: “Subhūti, tathāgata, is a synonym of “pure suchness.” That suchness is pure of, or does not have the faults of, relative phenomena.²²⁴

Also:

The suchness of all phenomena exists at all times for all objects. The suchness of a tathāgata is not other than that. Therefore, it too exists at all times for all objects.

Also:

In “desiring to be born in the family of the Tathāgata,” “the family of the Tathāgata,” refers to **naturally**, completely established suchness.

Also:

“The world is limitless due to dharmadhātu,” refers to the limitless worlds of sentient beings. The worlds of sentient beings are limitless, because dharmadhātu [is limitless].

Also:

Regarding, “because the fields of sentient beings are completely pure,” the fields of sentient beings are completely pure, because all sentient beings possess [completely pure] tathāgatagarbha [as their essence].

There, and so forth, [the essence] is extensively taught. Also, the *Compendium of Precious Qualities* says:

The suchness of the past is the suchness of the future.

The suchness of **all things** present is the suchness of the arhats.

The suchness of all phenomena²²⁵ is the suchness of the conquerors.

This suchness of **all** phenomena has no individuation.²²⁶

Also:

The suchness of the worldly, the suchness of the arhats,
The suchness of Pratyekabuddhas and buddhas' children,²²⁷
Is oneness free from things, suchness that has no other,²²⁸
The perfection of prajñā, known by the Tathāgata.²²⁹

Whether the wise abide in the world or in nirvāṇa,²³⁰
Faultless dharmatā, empty of dharmas, always exists.²³¹
When bodhisattvas later realize this suchness,
The Buddha bestows on them the title "tathāgata."²³²

Also:

This is the excellent treasure and treasury of phenomena,²³³
The enlightened family treasury of bliss and happiness.
Though past and future protectors of the world's ten directions
Are born from this dharmadhātu, it²³⁴ is never exhausted.

Though all the many trees and fruits and flowers and groves
Truly arise within, and come forth from, the earth;
The earth is not exhausted, and it does not increase.
It completely has no harm, no concept, and no sadness.

Though the many qualities of bliss and welfare
Of buddhas, their children, Śrāvakas, and Pratyekabuddhas²³⁵
All arise from the excellence of perfection of prajñā,
That knowledge is never exhausted, and it is never increased.

"It completely has no harm, no concept, and no sadness," means that [the absolute reality described in sūtra]; dharmakāya, sugatagarbha, dharmadhātu, suchness, changeless, self-arising pristine wisdom, completely established mahāmudrā, the innate union of buddhahood, the union of the Greater Madhyamaka; going into all of the three occasions, exists everywhere, at all times, as the ground of all phenomena. It is also [the absolute reality described in tantra as] the four herukas, the absolute deities, mantra, tantra, maṇḍala, mudrā, siddhi, and so forth.

Therefore, we can be confident that the intention of the supremely profound secret teachings of tantra is not contradictory with the intention of sūtra. That is taught according to the supreme instructions of the glorious [bodhisattvas] of the tenth level, including Ajita,²³⁶ Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, and Vajrapāṇi, the lords of the three [families]. With such points in mind, the emanation of the protector Avalokiteśvara, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, says:

Here, for this one entity, the profound way things are, there are a variety of many names describing [absolute] real things, qualities that are aspects of the essence, and non-things that are its faults.

Teaching only in terms of names for real things and qualities that are [beyond conception,] yogins use no conceptualized names

whose imputed objects are grasped as different from the essence.

They do so by well and completely inquiring into the instructions of the holy gurus. Then they rely on the [non-conceptual,] experienced meaning, [rather than the inevitably conceptual words that denote it.]²³⁷ This is like artisans closely working with gold, through smelting, shaping, and polishing it.²³⁸

(10). **How That Abides in Mantra as Many Families of the Great Afflictive Emotions and So Forth**

Similarly, with the intention that [the pure afflictions and deities described] are aspects of the [one] naturally, completely pure enlightened family of tathāgatagarbha, the glorious *Guhyasamāja* says:

Vairocana is hatred,²³⁹ which is the highest family.²⁴⁰
 Ratnasambhava is pride, the family of power.
 Amitābha is passion, the family of the great Dharma.²⁴¹
 Jealousy is the family of Amoghasiddhi.
 Akṣobhya is the family of the great ignorance.
 The one who is the cause, creator, and sealer²⁴²
 Of these five families is suchness, Vajrasattva.²⁴³
 Because he is the completely non-abiding essence,²⁴⁴
 He also exists within the family of Akṣobhya.

These words teach that the victorious ones of the five families of tantra are the absolute aspects of [the five poisons,] hatred, pride, passion, envy, and stupidity. Also, the glorious *Saṃputa* says:

These various aspects of the great seal of great illusion
 Are symbolically given the names of dākinīs.
 Because they go in the all-pervading space of the absolute,²⁴⁵
 These are so-designated as being dharmadhātu.
 Because its space is established as wandering everywhere,²⁴⁶
 Therefore, they are renowned as being the dākinīs²⁴⁷
 Samantabhadrī, Variety Consort, and Mahāmudrā,²⁴⁸
 Of Samantabhadra, Variety Vajra, and Cakrasaṃvara.²⁴⁹

These abide as the vajra and the vajra holder,
 As well as being the lotus and the lotus holder,
 As well as being the jewel and the jewel holder.
 These absolute dākinīs²⁵⁰ are within those families.

Here it says that the ground of emptiness, dharmadhātu itself, sealing [phenomena] as the great Mother [of all the buddhas], has the forms of various absolute dākinīs of the vajra and lotus families, and so forth. All of them are also in the naturally existing family. The *Supreme Tantra of Manifest Expression* says:

There are said to be many and various families.²⁵¹
 These families, in brief, are widely famed
 As being three, or five, or also six.

The ḍākinīs, and so forth,²⁵² entirely surround
Vajra yogins and gurus who unite
The aspect of prajñā with that of skillful means.

The **absolute**. pure three realms, without remainder,
Are truly **self-risen** from the **natural** family.
All absolute bodies individually rise²⁵³
As ‘other.’²⁵⁴ They are all²⁵⁵ of the mamo family.²⁵⁶
Joy and pleasant feelings of rejoicing
[All] arise and are born from absolute mind.²⁵⁷

These words, and so forth, extensively teach the different tantric families that begin with the naturally completely pure family, buddha nature, **luminous sugatagarbha, dharmakāya**. Likewise, glorious Vajragarbha says:

That naturally, completely pure family is taught as the absolute nature of the six families of Kālacakra. The heruka Kālacakra is the essence of the six families. Only he is called the “first buddha,” “**the primordially liberated buddha**,” and “**the buddha of the ground**.”

His necklace of a hundred heads is the hundred branches of the Vedas **and the hundred families of Halāhala**. His having a [hundred] vajra skulls of decapitated heads of Bhramā, **the creator of the world, signifies primordially cutting off the hundred families of māras**. By that, he is a great, transcendent victorious one.

The great binding of the two-fold net²⁵⁸ of the ḍākinīs of the *Lesser Cakrasaṃvara*,²⁵⁹ has the nature of six families **of space, wind, fire, water, earth, and pristine wisdom, abiding in [six] yogic cakras stacked along the central channel**.

Various other tantras, have the natures of five families.
Therefore, though the absolute families are said to be six,²⁶⁰
By their abbreviation, there are only five families.²⁶¹

According to the divisions of body, speech, and mind,
Subsequently, they were explained as being three.²⁶²

And:

By these stages of explanation
With the nature of five families,²⁶³
Five elements, and five skandhas;
This number of deity families was produced.
These were elucidated as the “families.”

That was the ascertainment of the six, five, and three families²⁶⁴. Likewise.
The *Secret Moon Drops Tantra* says:

The families were taught to be one hundred,²⁶⁵
Which were then abbreviated as five.
United in terms of body, speech, and mind,
These also were described as three families.

Also, the glorious *Drops of Pristine Wisdom Tantra* says:

Body is the Tathāgata giving refuge.²⁶⁶
Remember that the mind is Vajradhara.²⁶⁷

The body that is established from the five skandhas
Is the excellent nature of the five families.²⁶⁸

The sixth is the family of the great compassion.²⁶⁹
That is the chief of the countless families.

The five are the respective families
Of wheel, jewel, lotus, sword, and vajra;

Likewise, those of form, feeling, and perception
Along with conditioned formations and consciousness.²⁷⁰

Forms are renowned as being Vairocana,
The intrinsic essence of the stupidity vajra.

Feeling is the lord of the jewel family,²⁷¹
Who is the intrinsic essence of vajra pride.

Absolute perception is conqueror Amitābha,
Widely famed as being vajra passion.

Formations are the lord Amoghasiddhi,
Who is taught as vajra jealousy.

Consciousness is the conqueror Akṣobhya,
Meditated on as vajra aversion.

[Wisdom] space²⁷² is famed as Vajrasattva,
Free from division and master of attainment.²⁷³

Ignoring is the mirror-like pristine wisdom.
Pride is mindfulness of equality.²⁷⁴

Passion is discriminating **wisdom**.
Accomplishing action **pristine wisdom** is jealousy.
Anger is completely pure dharmadhātu.²⁷⁵

Coming from great bliss of the essence alone,
Five families **primordially abides**.

From the churning of [absolute] bliss that is white,
There is beautiful-faced Buddhalocanā,²⁷⁶
And the conqueror known as Vairocana.

Stupidity having the characteristic of Dharma,
Is the melted form of bliss that is black.
Have mindfulness of that as being Akṣobhya.

Because of the light of bliss **that is** red in color,
There is the tathāgata Amitābha.

Bliss that is blue, because of pervasion by wind,²⁷⁷

Is [truly] taught to be Amoghasiddhi.

Coming from pride, there is bliss that is yellow,
Taught to be [the blessed one] Ratnasambhava.

Free from space,²⁷⁸ the lord of accomplishment
Is Vajrasattva, master of all conquerors.

Because of fine long eyes,²⁷⁹ **perfection of prajñā.**
Body is in the aspect of excellent goddesses.²⁸⁰

They should be worshipped with [great] diligence,²⁸¹
And also, they should never be disparaged....

What is taught there is that, in the absolute:

1. [Absolute] forms, feelings, conceptualized perceptions, formations, and consciousness²⁸² are the wheel and jewel families, and so forth.
2. Absolute stupidity, anger, pride, passion, and jealousy²⁸³ are the families of the five pristine wisdoms, the mirror-like pristine wisdom, and so forth.
3. Absolute bliss that is white, blue, yellow, red, and green²⁸⁴ is bliss of the family of buddha Vairocana, and so forth.

Teaching here that absolute bliss is of white color, and so forth, does not refer to ordinary, relative colors and feelings. Likewise, “great color and great bodily size” refers to the colors and forms of suchness. What is said about ordinary colors does not contradict there being ‘other’ colors, **whose details of which are realized by meditation, according to the especially exalted oral instructions.**²⁸⁵ Intending the absolute colors of these families, the glorious *Hevajra* says:

Bliss is black, and also, bliss is yellow.²⁸⁶
Bliss is red, and also, bliss is white.
Bliss is green, and also, bliss is blue.
Bliss is the moving and also, the unmoving.²⁸⁷
Bliss is higher prajñā and skillful means.²⁸⁸
The bliss of their union is like sexual union.²⁸⁹
There is bliss of both real and unreal aspects.²⁹⁰
Bliss is also said to be Vajrasattva.

Vajrasattva, the inseparable essence of the ground and fruition, is suitable for the arising of all aspects, He [embodies] all aspects of shape and color. Since [Vajrasattva] abides as the essential union of the ground and fruition, this *Chapter on Vajra Families* from the *Hevajra Tantra* is about the fruition, as well [as the ground].

(11). **How That Abides as Nirvāṇa, Dharmakāya, and So Forth, in Which Ground and Fruition are Inseparable**

The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* also teaches that the ground and fruition are inseparable. As is said:

Maudgalyāyana, “Nirvāṇa” is a verbal convention.

It is a footprint.

It is the place of reaching the ultimate.

It is the perfectly pure and true.

It is fearless.

It is the great teacher.

It is the great fruition.

It is pristine wisdom that reaches the ultimate.

It is the great patience.²⁹¹

It is the meditative absorption of non-obstruction.²⁹²

It is great dharmadhātu.

It is the taste of delicious sweetness.²⁹³

It is difficult to see.²⁹⁴

These words say that the ground of everything, dharmadhātu, is also taught to be the great fruition. dharmadhātu is also the pristine wisdom of reaching the ultimate, called “the great teacher,” and so forth. Likewise, this same dharmakāya is cause, place, effect, ground, the Great Vehicle, the tathāgata essence, tathāgatagarbha, and so forth. The *Holy Golden Light Sūtra* says:

This dharmakāya manifests the various actions of the Tathāgata. Child of noble family, this is the **undefiled** cause, the sphere of experience of **self-aware pristine wisdom**, the place of **changeless bliss**, the fruition, **free from defilement**, and the [supporting] ground that is the nature of **phenomena**, with [all] **its inconceivable**, supported phenomena.

When the meaning of that is fully known, **all this, dharmakāya itself**, is the Great Vehicle, the essence of the Tathāgata, and sugatagarbha.

Depending on dharmakāya, [realization of] the first primordial mind is generated. Mind whose levels are completely purified arises in manifestation. The irreversible mind of the level of **buddhahood** arises in manifestation. So do the mind abiding separated by one birth form buddhahood, the Vajra-like Absorption, and the ultimate intention of the Tathāgata.

All of the Tathāgata’s holy Dharma of realization arises in manifestation, immeasurably and innumerably. Depending on dharmakāya, inconceivable, great meditative absorptions also manifest. Depending on meditative absorption and pristine wisdom, The two **form** kāyas arise. Since the existence of **uncompounded** dharmakāya depends only on its own **changeless** nature, it is permanent. It is called “the **pure** self.” Thus, the Tathāgata has arrived at and always abides in permanence, bliss, and complete purity.

- (12). **How That Abides as the Perfectly Established Nature of Phenomena, in Which Ground and Fruition are Inseparable**

Likewise, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* says:

Mahāmāti, what is the completely established nature? It is like this. It is **luminous** suchness **that is the [absolute] ground**. It is free from the conceptualized signs, names, and characteristics of relative things. It is not within the experience of consciousness. Attainment of realization is experience of the noble ones' pristine wisdom of discriminating self-awareness. Mahāmāti, this completely established, changeless nature is the mind of the tathāgatas.

These words say that the completely established nature of phenomena, their [ground and] essence, is the mind of the tathāgatas.²⁹⁵ This is also the self-arising five pristine wisdoms [of the fruition]. The intention is that this nature [of things] is also the completely established, inseparable essence of ground and fruition.

(13). **How That is Taught to be Dharmakāya and the Assembly of Its Qualities**

In this way, dharmadhātu, the ground of all phenomena, is taught also to be dharmakāya [that realizes them as they are. The *Sūtra Teaching no Diminishing and no Increase* says]:

Śāriputra, the absolute should be realized with faith **in the Word of the Buddha**. “The absolute” is a verbal designation for the nature²⁹⁶ of sentient beings. Śāriputra, “the nature, **or dhātu**, of sentient beings” is a verbal designation for tathāgatarbha. Śāriputra, “tathāgatarbha” is a verbal designation for dharmakāya.

Objection: Is not the intention of “**dharmakāya**” and “**sugatarbha**” mere relative seeds of buddhahood and emptiness of self in which no phenomena can be established at all?

Reply: No, because dharmakāya and sugatarbha possess the limitless qualities of the [absolute] pristine wisdom of buddhahood – the thirty-two powers of a buddha and others as numerous as the grains of sand in the river Ganges. The *Sublime Continuum* says that this is so, because dharmakāya and sugatarbha are without [division in essence. Asaṅga's] *Commentary* on those words says:

Within that [essence], are the undefiled qualities of buddhahood, **the thirty-two of the powers, and others as numerous as the grains of sand in the river Ganges**. They definitely exist, even on the level of sentient beings who are afflicted by the all-pervading afflictive emotions, even though they do not manifest for these beings. That is because **the essence, the nature of phenomena that pervades all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa**, exists pervasively and indivisibly. **The one taste of the pervasive nature of phenomena** is without distinction earlier, **in the occasion of a defiled sentient being**, and later, **in the occasion of an undefiled buddha**. Therefore, this topic is inconceivable.

For this reason, among all the different kinds of sentient beings, no sentient being exists in whom all the pristine wisdoms of a tathāgata do not abide as the fundamental state. However, because of obscurations due to conceptual fixations of perception, the pristine wisdoms of a tathāgata do not manifest [for them]. When [these beings] are freed from these conceptual fixations of perception, the unobstructed pristine wisdom of omniscience fully arises in manifestation as the fundamental state. *As is said in the Buddhāvataṃsaka Sūtra:*

O children of the Victorious One, it is like this, for example. Say that there was a great silken cloth with the measure of great third order thousand-fold world realm.²⁹⁷ Say that, on this great silken cloth, all the world realms of this great third order thousand-fold world realm were perfectly painted, in this way: With the measure of that great silken cloth, that great silken cloth *was painted*. With the measure of the great earth, the great earth *was painted*. With the measure of the second order thousand-fold world realms, the second order thousand-fold world realms *were painted*. With the measure of the great ocean, the great ocean *was painted*. With the measure of the southern continent, Jambuling, the southern continent, Jambuling, *was painted*. With the measure of the eastern continent, Videha, the eastern continent, Videha, *was painted*. With the measure of the western continent, Aparagodaniya, the western continent, Aparagodaniya, *was painted*. With the measure of the northern continent, Kurava, the northern continent, Kurava, *was painted*. With the measure of Mount Meru, Mount Meru *was painted*. With the measure of the palaces of the gods living on the earth, the palaces of the gods living on the earth *were painted*. With the measure of the palaces of the gods living in the desire realm, the palaces of the gods living in the desire realm *were painted*. With the measure of the palaces of the gods living in the form realm, the palaces of the gods living in the form realm *were painted, and likewise, for all the other aspects and qualities*.

The length and width of that great silken cloth was the measure of the great third order thousand-fold world realm, *exemplifying the extent of phenomena*. That great silken cloth was put into a single atom. *That exemplifies how the nature of phenomena is obscured and covered by incidental defilements*. As that great silken cloth was put into a single atom, so it was put into all atoms, without remainder. *That exemplifies how, though the nature is within all sentient beings, none of them can see it*.

Then a certain person appeared, wise, capable, brilliant, and clear-minded, having the perspicacity to enter [into that

atom]. With eyes that had become divine eyes, completely pure and clear, that person looked with those divine eyes and thought, “This great silken cloth exists within this tiny atom, where it is of no use to any sentient being. Alas! With the power of great effort, I will open this tiny atom. I will use this great silken cloth to sustain all sentient beings.” Arousing great power of effort, opening that tiny atom with a tiny vajra; in accord with those wishes, that person then used that great silken cloth to sustain all sentient beings. As was done with that one tiny atom, the same was done with all atoms, without remainder. **This exemplifies the Buddha’s teachings about sugatagarbha.**

O children of the Victorious One, similarly the pristine wisdom of the Tathāgata, **the absolute ground of emptiness that is empty of other**, immeasurable pristine wisdom, pristine wisdom that sustains all sentient beings, abides, without any incompleteness, within the mind continuums of all sentient beings. The mind continuums of all beings are immeasurable, like the pristine wisdom of the Tathāgata itself. Though that is indeed so, bound by conceptual fixations of perception, these childish ones do not know, utterly do not know, do not experience, and do not manifest this pristine wisdom of the Tathāgata that abides in themselves and all others.

Then, with the unattached pristine wisdom of a tathāgata, seeing the Tathāgata’s dharmadhātu that abides within all sentient beings, the absolute ground of emptiness that is empty of other, but whose natural luminosity has many phenomena and qualities, I became a teacher.

[I thought,] “Alas! These sentient beings, who have been my mothers, do not know the pristine wisdom of a tathāgata as it is; and yet, I know that the pristine wisdom of a tathāgata abides within them. I will fully teach these sentient beings the path of the noble ones, **which is like a tiny vajra indestructible by concepts**. Then all the fetters due to the conceptualized perception of these childish ones will be cleared away.

Former relative buddhas, by arousing the power of the pristine wisdom of the noble ones, **in the occasion of the [four] paths of learning**, cleared away the great knots of conceptualized perception. Then they personally and fully knew the [non-conceptual] pristine wisdom of a tathāgata. Having **attained the two kāyas**, they attained equality with other tathāgatas.

Just so, by my teaching these **beings** the path of the tathāgatas **that is like a [tiny] vajra**, all the bonds of these childish ones that result from their conceptualized perception will be eliminated. When all the bonds resulting from their

conceptualized perception are eliminated, the immeasurable pristine wisdom of a tathāgata will sustain all these beings.”

Thus, the fundamental way things are, the buddhadharmakāya, with all its immeasurable qualities and [absolute] phenomena, is taught to abide within all sentient beings, without incompleteness. Also, the exalted *Queen Śrīmāla-devī Sūtra* says:

The Tathāgata’s dharmakāya is taught to possess inconceivable phenomena of buddhahood, inseparable **from the absolute**, and transcending in number the grains of sand in the river Ganges. Blessed One, when this dharmakāya of the Tathāgata is not yet liberated from the covering of the afflictive emotions, it is called “tathāgatagarbha.”

Thus, the nature of phenomena, dharmakāya, sugatagarbha, is taught to be inseparable in nature from buddha qualities transcending in number the number of grains of sand in the river Ganges. The Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra also teaches that sugatagarbha, the nature of buddhahood, natural buddhahood, **the absolute ground of emptiness that is emptiness of other**, is the selfhood whose [intrinsic] qualities are the powers, fearlessnesses, immeasurable meditative absorptions, and other qualities of dharmakāya:

Child of noble family, the Tathāgata’s ten powers, four fearlessnesses, the three that are great, great: 1. kindness, 2. compassion, and 3. application of mindfulness, the ten million and eighty thousand meditative absorptions, the absorption of Going as a Hero, and so forth,²⁹⁸ the thirty-two major marks, the eighty minor marks, the thirty-five thousand enumerations of meditative absorption, such as the five pristine wisdom mudrā consorts, the forty-five hundred enumerations of meditative absorption such as the Vajra-like Meditative Absorption, attainment of immeasurably limitless meditative absorptions of skillful means, and all such qualities are [qualities of] the buddha nature of the Tathāgata. They are **self-existing, skillful means of the absolute ground of emptiness that is emptiness of other**. This buddha nature has seven [intrinsic] phenomena **or natural qualities**: permanence, selfhood, bliss, complete purity, reality, truth, and goodness.

This answer making these distinctions was given [in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*]. Also:

Child of noble family, for example, the moon is not seen when the month first begins;²⁹⁹ but it is not correct to say that the moon is non-existent. Buddha nature is also like that. Lowly, small children cannot see it, but it is not correct to say that buddha nature is non-existent.

Child of noble family, buddha nature is like this. The ten powers,

four fearlessnesses, the three that are great, the great kindness, the great compassion, and the three aspects of great application of mindfulness exist in all sentient beings; but only when the afflictive emotions are completely overcome, will they first be seen [by them].

When those who have wrong craving completely overcome that wrong craving, they will first attain the ten powers, the four fearlessnesses, the three that are great, great kindness, great compassion, and great application of mindfulness. Because of those truths, I say that the buddha nature always exists within sentient beings.

And also:

The buddha nature of the tathāgatas, the absolute ground of emptiness of other, naturally established renunciation and realization, has two aspects, the existent **qualities of the natural state** [that are naturally realized] and the non-existent, **fabricated, incidental faults** [that are naturally renounced].

The existent qualities are like this. **The absolute ground of emptiness of other has** the thirty-two major marks, the eighty minor marks, the ten powers, the four fearlessness, the three that are great—application of mindfulness, the great kindness, the great compassion—, and immeasurable meditative absorptions of Going as a Hero, and so forth, the Vajra-like Meditative Absorption, and so forth, skillful means, and so forth, and the five pristine wisdoms, and so forth.

The non-existent qualities are like this: [the absolute ground] does not have virtues, non-virtues, and neutral actions; karma, cause and effect, ripening, afflictive emotions, the five skandhas, and the twelve links of interdependent origination. All these are transcended by a tathāgata.

There, and so forth, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* teaches extensively how, when something is non-existent in something, the second is empty of the first,³⁰⁰ but whatever remains always exists. This distinction is exemplified by the differences between [deliberate renunciation vs.] naturally existing renunciation and realization, non-affirming vs. affirming negation, mere [conceptual] non-existence vs. the [non-conceptual] ground of non-existence, negative vs. positive determination, and emptiness vs. mere freedom from elaborations as isolation.

These important points are profound, subtle, and hard to realize. However, the meaning of what exists must be properly **ascertained and** realized, in terms of the differences between empty, relative qualities and the [non-empty] ground that is empty of them. That is realized depending on the instructions [for practice that relies] on that meaning. Moreover, exalted Ajita, Maitreya, says of sugatagarbha in the *Sublime Continuum*:

It is luminous **by nature**, not produced **by cause and conditions**,

Inseparably established with all the buddha qualities
 Of the absolute ground of emptiness that is empty of other,
 Transcending the number of grains of sand in the river Ganges.

There, and so forth, it is taught that that sugatagarbha, the naturally luminous, uncompounded space of the dhātu, indivisibly possesses [all] the inseparable qualities of buddhahood, whose number transcends the number of grains of sand in the river Ganges. Likewise, the *Sūtra for the Benefit of Aṅgulimāla*, with teachings as rare as the udumvāra flower, [that blooms only once in a century,] says that: all faulty aspects, like arising and cessation, are naturally non-existent; the nature of phenomena has numerous, naturally established qualities, the limitless major and minor marks, and so forth; and this nature exists within all sentient beings as the dhātu of buddhahood. It exists within enlightened [beings as manifestation of] that dhātu:

Though all the buddhas sought with all kinds of diligence, they would never find a created tathāgatagarbha. Within all sentient beings exists the uncreated nature of buddhahood, as the space of the dhātu, limitlessly adorned with the excellent major and minor marks.

Though all the buddhas sought in a diligent way, they would never find an arisen dhātu. In all sentient beings the unborn dhātu exists as the dhātu of buddhahood, limitlessly adorned with the excellent major and minor marks.

Though all the buddhas sought in a diligent way, they would never find an impermanent dhātu. In all sentient beings the permanent dhātu exists as the dhātu of buddhahood, limitlessly adorned with the excellent major and minor marks.

Though all the buddhas sought diligently, they would never find a dhātu that is not forever-enduring. In all sentient beings, a forever-enduring dhātu exists as the dhātu of buddhahood, limitlessly adorned with the excellent major and minor marks.

Though all the buddhas sought with extreme diligence, they would never find a dhātu that is not a swastika of endurance. In all sentient beings, a dhātu that is a swastika of endurance exists as the dhātu of buddhahood, limitlessly adorned with the excellent major and minor marks.

Though all the buddhas sought with extreme diligence, they would never find sickness in tathāgatagarbha. In all sentient beings, a dhātu that is without sickness exists as the dhātu of buddhahood, limitlessly adorned with the excellent major and minor marks.

Though all the buddhas sought with extreme diligence, they would never find old age and death in tathāgatagarbha. In all sentient beings, a dhātu that is without old age and death exists as the dhātu of buddhahood, limitlessly adorned with the excellent major and

minor marks.

Though all the buddhas sought with extreme diligence, they would never find a disintegrating tathāgatarbha. In all sentient beings, a dhātu that is without disintegration exists as the dhātu of buddhahood, limitlessly adorned with the excellent major and minor marks.

Though all the buddhas sought with extreme diligence, they would never find a destructible tathāgatarbha. In all sentient beings, a dhātu that is without destruction exists as the dhātu of buddhahood, limitlessly adorned with the excellent major and minor marks.

Though all the buddhas sought with extreme diligence, they would never find defilement in tathāgatarbha. In all sentient beings, a dhātu that is without defilement exists as the dhātu of buddhahood, limitlessly adorned with the excellent major and minor marks.

For example, a [homogenous] mixture of water and grain oil is not seen, **but the two remain separate. Similarly**, the dhātu of buddhahood is covered by tens of millions of afflictive emotions, but it is never mixed with those afflictive emotions. The dhātu indeed abides within those tens of millions of afflictive emotions, but it is [hidden] like a lamp within a vase. When the vase is broken, the lamp shines forth in splendor. [So, when the afflictive emotions are purified, the dhātu shines forth in splendor.] The one who teaches [this regarding] tathāgatarbha is the perfect Buddha.

There, and so forth, this is extensively taught. If you know the divisions of scope of the two truths, you will not be bewildered by the Sage's Word regarding the major and minor marks. The major and minor marks that are naturally complete in sugatarbha, dharmadhātu, are qualities of absolute dharmakāya. They are not qualities of the relative kāyas of form.

When it is said "the thirty-two major marks are complete," such statements should be understood only in terms of the major and minor marks of the ultimate, definitive meaning, as taught in the profound tantras. Such teachings lead to perception of the real thing by pristine wisdom. That perception is accomplished through especially exalted meditation, according to the oral instructions of the guru. That perception is not within the realm of logicians. The noble one Asaṅga, an exponent of Greater Madhyamaka, said **in the *Commentary on the Sublime Continuum***:

With sixty aspects³⁰¹ that are taught **in the *Sūtra of the Questions of King Dhāraṇīśvara*, by means of** its completely pure qualities being completely purified [of defilements;] the dhātu of buddhahood, **possessing many qualities**, is clearly perceived. If an object [like that dhātu], with its **many** qualities, can be purified; teaching purifying practices to purify it is useful. **If the dhātu and its qualities did not exist, teaching such practices would be useless.**

[According to what is said there,] merely by teaching purifying antidotes, the ground of purification, sugatagarbha with its many qualities, is also [implicitly] taught. Even when sugatagarbha is not explicitly taught, all scriptures that teach purifying antidotes also [implicitly] teach the ground of purification, sugatagarbha. That is Asaṅga's explicit intention here.

If so, just as relative qualities exist in relative truth, absolute qualities exist in absolute truth. We should become capable in working with the reality corresponding to this great intention. Since absolute qualities are inseparable from absolute truth, [the absolute] possesses inseparable qualities, transcending in number the grains of sand of the river Ganges.

In other words, if sugatagarbha arises merely in the conceptual comprehension of the mental sense, it cannot be comprehended completely, along with its intrinsic qualities of dharmakāya. Saying otherwise would contradict the clear teachings of the scriptures above and many other explanations.

(14). **Teaching That These Points are Also Asserted by the Noble One Nāgārjuna and His Followers**

Objection: Others may say that sugatagarbha is the definitive meaning of the Buddha's teachings, but the tradition of Madhyamaka does not maintain this.

Answer: The venerable noble one Nāgārjuna, [who founded of the tradition of Madhyamaka,] did maintain this. His *Praise of Dharmadhātu* says:

To that, such that all who do not know it
Cycle in the three realms of saṃsāra,
And which is the true place of all beings,
To dharmadhātu I prostrate and I bow.³⁰²

The very thing that is the cause³⁰³ of saṃsāra,³⁰⁴
From the purification of that itself;³⁰⁵
That itself, in its purity,³⁰⁶ is nirvāṇa.
Dharmakāya is also that itself.

Just as, when it is present mixed with milk,
The essence of butter within it does not appear;
So, by mixture with the afflictive emotions,
Dharmadhātu also does not appear.

Just as, by refining it³⁰⁷ from milk,
The essence of butter will be undefiled;
So, by purification of afflictions,
Dharmadhātu is utterly undefiled.³⁰⁸

Just as a lamp that is inside a vase
Cannot be even a little bit perceived;
Likewise, in the vase of the afflictions,
Dharmadhātu cannot be perceived.

Working in this direction and in that,
Holes can be made within the covering vase;
And so, in this direction and from that,
The light of the nature will subsequently shine.³⁰⁹

When, by attaining the Vajra-like Absorption,
The vase of afflictions is completely broken;
Then the luminous essence of dharmadhātu
Goes shining forth to the very limits of space.

There was never a time when dharmadhātu rose.³¹⁰
There will never be a time when it subsides.
At all times, it is without afflictions,
Undeiled, in beginning, middle, and end.³¹¹

Just as the shining surface of precious vaidūrya,³¹²
Is entirely luminous at all times;
But, when it abides in covering earth and stone,
Its shining light is manifest to no one;

Likewise, when it is covered by afflictions,
Though dharmadhātu is undeiled in nature,
Its light cannot shine forth within saṃsāra;³¹³
But in nirvāṇa it is luminous.³¹⁴

Also:

Even the undeiled sun and moon
Are obscured by five different of obscurations.
These are 1. clouds or haze, 2. mist or fog, and 3. smoke,
4. The face of Rāhu,³¹⁵ as well as 5. dust, and so forth.

In the same way, the mind of luminosity
Has been obscured by five obstructing afflictions.
These are 1. desire, 2. malice, and 3. laziness,
With 4. wild excitement and 5. doubt or hesitation.

Just as a garment³¹⁶ that can be cleansed by fire,
Which is stained by various kinds of stains,
When it has been placed within a fire,
The stains are burned away, but the cloth is not;

So, **when** the luminosity of mind,
Has defilements of desire, and so forth,
They are burned away, in the fire of pristine wisdom,³¹⁷
But [absolute,] luminous mind itself is not.

All the sūtras that teach emptiness,
As many as were taught by the Conqueror,
All of them reverse the afflictive emotions;³¹⁸
But dharmadhātu itself remains unharmed.

Just as water in the midst of the earth
Abides there purely, free from all defilement,³¹⁹

Likewise, pristine wisdom,³²⁰ in the afflictions,
Also abides **forever** without defilement.³²¹

Also:

Just as a child that is in the womb
Exists there, even though it is not seen;
Likewise, in the covering of the afflictions
Dharmadhātu [exists, but] is not seen.

Also:

Just as a river in summer
Is said to be [quite] warm,
But later, in the winter,
It is said, "It is [very] cold;"

When it is covered by the net of the afflictions,
Dharmadhātu is called a "sentient being;"
But when it has been freed from the afflictions,
Dharmadhātu then is called "a buddha."

There, and so forth, dharmadhātu, dharmakāya, naturally luminous mind, self-arising pristine wisdom and so forth, all of which are synonymous with sugatagarbha, are extensively taught, with many examples. This same master, **the noble one Nāgārjuna**, also teaches that this **natural luminosity** is the place, or way of abiding, of all the buddhas:

This is the absolute truth,
Without [false] appearance and signs.
What is called "absolute truth,"
Is the place of all the tathāgatas.

Other terms **used by the noble ones** are taught as synonyms for this absolute reality in master Bhāvaviveka's *Precious Lamp of the Middle Way*:

It has been explained as dharmakāya,
As consciousness with luminosity,
As the consciousness of dharmakāya,
And as natural luminosity,
Innate nirvāṇa and emptiness of all,
And ground of emptiness of all phenomena.³²²

In this case, the intended meaning of "consciousness" is "consciousness of the nature of phenomena" and "completely pure consciousness," **and "consciousness transcending the three times and three realms."** Those kinds of consciousness are synonyms of [pristine wisdom of] luminous dharmakāya.

Āryadeva explains sugatagarbha **as an example of** terms for **the definitive meaning** in his *Compendium that is a Lamp for Practice*. He explains how assertions that **the ground of emptiness**, absolute truth is without a [relative] body, **as the supreme body** or kāya, and without examples,

and free from all undertaking of [conditioned] actions, **because it is unconditioned, could have faults of contradiction.** That is because [the assertions are in conventional discourse that describes the dualistic relative, while] **all this above** is apprehended by the [non-dual, absolute] **experience of** discriminating awareness **pristine wisdom.** Therefore, Āryadeva says that absolute truth cannot be known conceptually, through words. It can only be known by meditating [on it non-conceptually], according to the verbal teachings of a guru:³²³

As a lamp that is placed in a vase
Does not shine outside of it;
But after the vase is destroyed,
The light of the lamp shines openly;

So, in the vase of your own body **of five skandhas,**
The **luminous** light of the lamp of suchness³²⁴ [secretly] shines;
But when [the vase is] well-broken, by the guru's words,
The Buddhas' primordial wisdom clearly **manifests.**

Space arises from space,
Where space is seeing space.
From the mouth of the guru,
The yoga of this is well taught....³²⁵

Objection: Doesn't master Candrakīrti refute that tathāgatagarbha as the definitive meaning in *Entering the Middle Way*?

Answer: [Whatever else he may say,] Candrakīrti clearly teaches tathāgatagarbha is the definitive meaning in his *Commentary that is a Clear Lamp for the Guhyasamāja*, where he says:

The syllable OM is sugatagarbha. Since this syllable creates the yogin's indestructible body, it produces attainment of the vajra body.

Also:

The abode of all buddhas is all sentient beings,
because [all beings] are possessors of sugatagarbha.

Even in *Entering the Middle Way*, he says:

Whether buddhas arise or they do not,
In reality, the emptiness **of nature**
Of all real things has been proclaimed,
As [emptiness] of the reality of other.³²⁶

The true, pure ultimate³²⁷ as well as suchness
Are the emptiness of other things.³²⁸

He also comments:

'Other' reality is supreme arising of suchness
This, rising as supreme, is eternal existence.³²⁹

It is reasonable to analyze whether what Candrakīrti says is internally contradictory. I wonder whether, in his earlier philosophical training, some conceptual thought may have arisen in his mind like “Sugatagarbha is very like the Hindu extremists’ universal self.” Then, later perhaps, when he entered into profound secret mantra, his mind developed, and his doctrine changed.

c. **Eleven Instructions Regarding Abandoning Bad Views
Asserted by Those Who are Unskilled in Examining Scripture**

(1). **Abandoning the Deluded, Evil View that, by Teaching a
Purpose, Scriptures are of the Provisional Meaning**

(a). **Abandoning the Deluded, Evil View that, by Teaching a
Purpose, The Sublime Continuum is of the Provisional
Meaning**

Objection: Doesn’t the *Sublime Continuum* teach that sugatagarbha is of the provisional meaning in the following passage, [by teaching that all knowable objects, including sugatagarbha, are like illusion?]

Like clouds, dreams, and illusions, in this and that *sūtra*,³³⁰
Having taught all knowable objects are empty in every aspect;
Why did the victorious ones also give sentient beings
The teaching that the essence of buddhahood exists?

1. Sentient beings with discouraged minds, 2. contempt for others’
lowness,
3. Grasping what is not real, 4. disparaging real phenomena,
5. And excessive attachment to self, these five faults that exist,
So that they might be abandoned, [the existing essence] was taught.

Answer: Not so. [Maitreya is referring to objects knowable by relative consciousness.] No words in that passage teach that existent sugatagarbha, [which is knowable only by pristine wisdom,] is of the provisional meaning.

Objection: The words, “it was taught for the sake of abandoning five faults,” establish that this text is of the provisional meaning, [because all teachings taught to fulfil a certain purpose are provisional.]

Answer: Telling the purpose of teaching [a text] does not entail that the teaching is provisional and false. To teach [the Buddha’s] purpose in teaching, Asaṅga’s commentary cited above says:

Since this nature *or dhātu, the fundamental natural state*, is difficult to view, what is the use of undertaking to teach it to child-like sentient beings? Regarding the abridged purpose of clearly teaching the existence of the fundamental nature, there are [the above] two stanzas. The first teaches the question, and the second teaches the answer.

If, by teaching a purpose, a text becomes one of the provisional meaning, it will absurdly follow that all texts of the definitive meaning that also happen to teach a purpose will be of the provisional meaning.

Objection: If sugatagarbha is of the definitive meaning, what is the intention of such assertions in the Mother of the Victorious Ones, the Perfection of Prajñā Sūtras, and so forth, as, all phenomena are empty like clouds, dreams, and magical illusions. They appear, but their natures do not truly exist? [You say that sugatagarbha is a phenomenon experienced by pristine wisdom. Therefore, its appearance is like illusion and its nature does not exist.]

Answer: Explaining the purposes of such assertions extensively, the *Sublime Continuum* says:

The ultimate pure and true is quite devoid
Of all compounded, conditioned phenomena.
The afflictions, karma, and its ripening
Are said to be **self-empty**, like clouds, and so forth.

The afflictive emotions are said to be like clouds.
Karma is like experience in a dream.
The ripening fruit of karma of the afflictions,
The skandhas, are like emanated illusions.³³¹

Having earlier made such a presentation,³³²
Later, in this Sublime Continuum,
For the sake of forsaking five faults,
The existence of the nature is **clearly** taught.³³³

If this teaching were not heard like that,³³⁴
By their having the fault of 1. self-contempt,
In some, whose minds become depressed and discouraged,
There would be no arising of bodhicitta.

In some, when bodhicitta has arisen,
There would be 2. pride that thinks, "I am excellent."
They would perceive them as lower **and despise**
Those in whom bodhicitta has not risen,

In those beings described, who did not hear
[The teaching] that sugatagarbha [truly] exists
3.-Knowing reality would not arise.³³⁵
Therefore, they would grasp what is not real,³³⁶
And have no insight of true reality.³³⁷

Because they are fabricated and incidental,
4.-The faults of sentient beings are unreal.³³⁸
In reality they are selfless, hence self-empty.
Beings' [absolute] virtues are naturally pure.³³⁹

Those grasping the faulty view of unreality,
By disparaging the virtues of the real,

5. Would not attain the kindness that sees beings
As equal with themselves, who are so learned;³⁴⁰

But from that teaching being heard in this text,³⁴¹

1. Inspiration,³⁴² 2. respect like that of the teacher,³⁴³

3. Knowledge,³⁴⁴ 4. wisdom,³⁴⁵ and 5. a great kindness³⁴⁶ arise.³⁴⁷

From the arising of those five phenomena,

There is 1. no fault of despair and is 2. equal view,³⁴⁸

3. No faults, but 4. presence, of virtues regarding the real,³⁴⁹

5. Making oneself and beings be **seen as** equal,³⁵⁰

So that buddhahood is quickly gained.

Thus, after these five great faults are abandoned, these five great virtues are attained. Then buddhahood too is quickly attained. The Buddha teaches this [abandoning and attaining] as the purpose of clearly explaining sugatagarbha in the final turning. [Your] claim that teaching this purpose entails that this text is one of the provisional meaning is just nonsense.

There, and so forth, by ten qualities, and the nine examples **of a buddha in an ugly lotus, and so forth that were listed above**, defiled sugatagarbha or suchness is extensively resolved in its many aspects. Thus is resolved again and again to be a very important topic. [As listed in the *Sublime Continuum*, the ten qualities are:

The meaning intended by “ultimate domain”

Should be known through its 1. essential nature,

2. Cause, 3. result, 4. function, 5. endowments, 6. approach,

7. Phases, 8. pervasiveness, and 9. changelessness,

And 10. inseparability of its qualities.]

Objection: These points concerning [the nine examples of] defilements of suchness are taught in the *Sublime Continuum* itself to be of the provisional meaning.

Answer: Not so. Later, in presenting the occasion of undefiled suchness, the text says:

Like the herd-leading Sage, the honey, and the kernels,

The precious gold **mass**, the treasure, and the tree,

An undefiled, precious statue of the Tathāgata,

A lord of the earth, and molded golden statue....

The same nine examples that were previously taught to explain the occasion of defiled tathāgatagarbha are taught again here to explain the occasion of the [undefiled] fruition. The intention is that they are without difference, except for these two earlier and later occasions being presented as ground and fruition, due to the respective presence and absence of incidental defilements. Therefore, if sugatagarbha is provisional as the essence of the ground, it will also be provisional as the essence of the fruition, dharmakāya. **As the *Sublime Continuum* says:**

As it was before, so it is later,
The changeless nature of phenomena.

Therefore, the essence of suchness is without distinction in the ground and fruition. Moreover, in the case of buddha activity, the same text says:

The [fruition of all the] vehicles, without remainder is certainly attained, possessing assemblies of supreme, precious qualities, the ocean of pristine wisdom, and the sunlight of merit and pristine wisdom.

After buddhahood is attained, **as we perform benefits for others, dharmadhātu**, without limit or center, is like vast, all-pervading space. When **absolute** buddhahood is completely seen to be a treasure of **innumerable, absolute, undefiled** buddha qualities **that abide** in all sentient beings, without distinction; the nets of clouds that are the [two] obscurations of afflictive emotions and knowables are completely scattered, by the wind of the buddhas' compassion. **By that the essence is transformed from being like a cloudy sky to being like a cloudless one.**

Thus, a buddha in whom the limitless qualities of dharmakāya are complete is seen to abide within all sentient beings, without distinction. At the end the text also says:

Whatever merit I have attained from explaining the meaning of these seven vajra topics: (1-3)-The **three** jewels; (4) the **primordial** nature **or dhātu** sugatagarbha; (5) enlightenment **possessing the two purities** (6) the undefiled qualities of buddhahood; and (7) buddha activity; by that may these beings see the sage Amitayus, possessing limitless light. Having seen him, may the undefiled Dharma eye arise, so that they attain supreme enlightenment.

By teaching that the objects of these seven topics really exist, **these points** establish that defiled suchness also really exists. However, if sugatagarbha is of the provisional meaning, **its synonyms** dharmadhātu and suchness will also be provisional. If that is maintained, **its further synonym**, the buddhas' absolute, unconditioned dharmakāya, would also be provisional. If that too is maintained, then Cakrasaṃvara, Hevajra, Kālacakra, Guhyasamāja, and other tantric deities, as well as mantra, tantra, mudrā, maṇḍala, and so forth, all these the absolute realities that always abide omnipresent and all-pervading, would absurdly be provisional. However, they are not.

Furthermore, it is impossible that the victorious one Maitreya contradicted himself [so seriously] in earlier and later parts of one text. If he really said that sugatagarbha was non-existent, that would contradict the profound tantras and the especially exalted trilogy of bodhisattva commentaries.³⁵¹

- (b). **Abandoning the Deluded, Evil View that Tathāgatagarbha is of the Provisional Meaning Because the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra mentions a Purpose for Teaching It**

According to the *Sublime Continuum*, the purpose of clearly teaching the real existence of sugatagarbha, the dhātu of suchness, is that five great faults will be abandoned and five great virtues will be attained. It also has the purpose of abandoning fear of selflessness. Regarding that, emptiness, the pure true ultimate, nirvāṇa, the unborn, the signless, the selfless ground and sugatagarbha do indeed have the same meaning. However, the Buddha saw that, if that meaning was taught by [negative] terms like emptiness and selflessness, some would give rise to fear of these mere names. Therefore, he taught that meaning using the [positive] term “sugatagarbha,” lest the nature of the absolute [seem to] be cut off [as self-empty and non-existent]. Thus, the Buddha produced those hearers’ entering into the [ultimate] meaning of emptiness and selflessness, the naturally luminous, completely non-conceptual space of the dhātu, with no appearance of incidental defilements. The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* says:

Mahāmāti asked, “When tathāgatagarbha was taught in other sūtras that were taught by the Blessed One, the Blessed One said there that tathāgatagarbha was by nature luminous and completely pure from the beginning, that it possessed the thirty-two major marks of the absolute ground of emptiness, and that it existed within the bodies, gathered together from the five skandhas, of all sentient beings.

The Blessed One said that, like a precious gem of great price wrapped in dirty cloth, so that it could not be seen, tathāgatagarbha was wrapped in the cloth of the self-perpetuating skandhas, constituents, and sense sources so that it could not be seen, was overcome by passion, aversion, and stupidity so that it could not be seen, and was defiled with defilements of conceptualization so that it could not be seen.

Since tathāgatagarbha was said there to be permanent, stable, and unchanging, Blessed One, why is tathāgatagarbha not like Indian extremists’ affirmation of a self? Blessed One, Indian extremists also teach affirming a self that is permanent, is the doer of all actions, is analyzed as being without describable qualities, and is all-pervading, and indestructible.

The Blessed One spoke, saying “Mahāmāti, my teaching of tathāgatagarbha is not like Indian extremists’ affirmation of a self. Mahāmāti, the tathāgatas, the arhats, the completely perfect buddhas teach tathāgatagarbha as ‘the meaning of the word “emptiness,” the true pure ultimate, nirvāṇa, the unborn, the signless, the wishless, and so forth.

They teach that in order that childish ones will abandon being frightened by selflessness. Through the means of tathāgatagarbha, they teach the topics of absolute, completely non-conceptual, great bliss and naturally luminous suchness – the sphere of [absolute] experience without any relative appearance.

Mahāmati, bodhisattva great beings arising in the future and present should not be attached to this teaching as a teaching of [the relative] selfhood of individuals or phenomena. Tathāgatarbha is empty of these two kinds of selfhood.

Mahāmati, for example, potters, from one mass of clay particles, can make a variety of vessels with their hands, skillful workmanship, a rod, water, a measuring cord, and applied effort.

Mahāmati, similarly tathāgatas, can teach in various ways that involve prajñā and skillful means the Dharma of absolute, naturally luminous suchness that is free from the two kinds of selfhood and that completely excludes all conceptual characteristics.

They can teach it using the words “sugatarbha” or “selflessness,” as appropriate [for their hearers]. Like potters with their variety of resources and products, they can teach naturally luminous suchness with a variety of [positive and negative] words and verbal manifestations.

Therefore, Mahāmati, the buddhas’ teaching of tathāgatarbha is not like Indian extremists’ affirmation of a self. Mahāmati, this is because, through that teaching, the tathāgatas lead those who are attached to Indian extremists’ affirmation of a [relative] self to the profound reality.

When [the buddhas] teach using the word “tathāgatarbha,” tathāgatarbha is taught as the selfless ground. Regarding the purpose of teaching that topic by that word, the tathāgatas think, “How could those with thoughts that have fallen into unreal, conceptual views of selfhood and who are afraid of selflessness come to have thoughts abiding in the three doors to liberation [- the empty, the signless, and the wishless -] so that they are quickly, fully, and completely enlightened with true, perfect enlightenment? As long as they are not free from fixating [relative] selfhood, they cannot attain enlightenment. To free them from that fixation, they must enter into [dharma]dhātu, the nature without [relative] selfhood.

Mahāmati, for that purpose, the tathāgatas, the arhats, the truly, perfectly enlightened buddhas teach tathāgatarbha. Therefore, tathāgatarbha is not like Indian extremists’ affirmation of a self. Mahāmati, to eliminate Indian extremists’ view of a self, beings are made to enter into the pure and true, the absolute self of suchness, sugatarbha - which is, nevertheless, selfless, in not having the two kinds of relative selfhood of individuals and phenomena. To teach the ground of emptiness of all conceptual, relative phenomena, the unborn ground, free from duality with anything other than its own single nature, [the ground] free from all natures of such things, is to teach the bodhisattvas’ unsurpassable doctrine of suchness. By completely comprehending this teaching of

profound Dharma, you will completely comprehend all the sūtras of the Great Vehicle.

Thus, tathāgatagarbha is not like the self of Indian extremists, because it is empty of the two kinds of selfhood. The uncompounded nature of [absolute] phenomena transcends instantaneous [relative] phenomena. It is permanent, stable, and unchanging; yet it is not empty, like space that lacks the qualities, powers, and other [absolute] phenomena of buddhahood. Thus, it is not like the self of a [merely relative] individual that Indian extremists classify as permanent. The complete major and minor marks of tathāgatagarbha are capable of manifesting all the aspects, powers, masteries, and qualities of the [absolute] essence. They are not the same as the major and minor marks of the relative form kāyas.

“In that way, the tathāgatas lead those attached to the Indian extremists’ affirmation of a self...” shows the purpose of teaching them tathāgatagarbha. However, teaching that purpose does not entail that tathāgatagarbha is of the provisional meaning, because it is really non-existent, like the mother’s promise of laddu to her child, [in the old story].³⁵²

Why so? “There were indeed times when the Buddha taught tathāgatagarbha, [secretly] intending suchness, self-emptiness, and so forth; but there were also many times when he taught suchness, self-emptiness, and so forth, secretly intending tathāgatagarbha. All of these terms have the same referent.

If so, since suchness, [self-emptiness,] and so forth, really exist [as the same experience], so do tathāgatagarbha, and so forth. Though all these individual words have the same meaning, words in accord with the thoughts of some, may not be in accord with the preconceptions of others; and those in accord with the preconceptions of those others may not be in accord with the thought of still others.

Because of that, the ground empty of all phenomena, the nature of phenomena, the single dhātu of the absolute, is taught in the profound sūtras and tantras as [self-]emptiness, signlessness, and so forth; but it is also taught as naturally present nirvāṇa, the dhātu of true selfhood, [truly existent] buddha nature, and so forth. The ground is also taught as heruka, Vajrasattva, EVAM, A HO, mahāmudrā, the source of dharmas, the [bountiful] bhaga or womb, A, the [indestructible] vajra, and numerous other names.

Teaching the ground by the [negative] words “emptiness” and “selflessness” is not meaningful [or appealing] for some Indian extremists. Seeing that it would be very meaningful [and appealing] for them, if the same reality were taught by the [positive] word “tathāgatagarbha,” the Buddha taught the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* using that word. That is the point.

Though the referent that exists is one, different words and phrases are relied on to teach it to some [hearers]. Thus, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, as translated by Devacandra, says:

If the Buddha taught, “Tathāgatagarbha is empty,” child-like ones whose weak minds had not yet entered into the strength of the definitive meaning would fall into the partiality of meditating on a terrifying, nihilistic distortion. Those with higher knowing are aware that, though permanent and changeless luminous dharmadhātu appears as a variety of [relative] things, they are [all] unreal. They are like something that exists as a mere illusion, while the fundamental natural state truly exists as the absolute....

If it were not like that, if just by containing phrases like, “for that purpose, the tathāgatas taught...,” a text were of the provisional meaning, then when Maitreya’s Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle says, “In order to lead some,...” to present the purpose of teaching the single, final vehicle, that text too would absurdly be one of the provisional meaning.

Moreover, the Buddha teaches that all the profound paths of the definitive meaning were taught to lead those to be tamed from conceptual dichotomies, like [the suffering of] cyclic existence and [nihilistic] peace to the supreme city of great liberation [that is beyond conceptual fixation]. It would absurdly follow, that they too were all provisional.

In sum, there is a great difference between teaching provisional meanings and teaching to guide those to be tamed. However, some who do not understand that difference continue to say that the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*’s teaching of sugatagarbha is provisional, and this is the source of their confusion.

(2). **Establishing Reasons Why, If Sugatagarbha Were Really Non-Existent, There Would be Extremely Absurd Consequences**

If sugatagarbha were really non-existent, that would contradict the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*:

Abiding in inward absorption on the level of buddhahood, sugatagarbha, he heard with the buddha mind absolute words from within space, “Lord of Laṅka, it is good, it is good. Also, Lord of Laṅka, you are good. As you are training, so those possessing yoga should train. As you view tathāgatas and phenomena, so they should be viewed. If they are viewed otherwise, so that the absolute is self-empty, so that it is not established as absolute, so that affirmatively established phenomena are absent there, and so forth; the viewer will abide in nothingness...”

Also, it says there:

Absolute mind is the luminous nature, absolute goodness.
That is tathāgatagarbha, natural, total purity.
For the skandhas that perpetuate sentient beings,

[Extremes of] limit and limitless are completely abandoned.³⁵³

By cleansing,³⁵⁴ the color of gold is clearly shown
As being pure gold, and the same is true of bronze.
As they are seen, to see the absolute.

In [individual] beings with the skandhas,³⁵⁵
Individuals' skandhas [must be cleansed].³⁵⁶

As pristine wisdom, undefiled buddhahood.

Always meditating on absolute peace,³⁵⁷

I³⁵⁸ go for refuge to that absolute.³⁵⁹

That refuge, absolute mind with its luminous nature,
Being together with grasping, [relative] selfhood,
With the afflictions of the mental, and so forth,³⁶⁰
Was fully taught by the Highest Exponent.³⁶¹

And:

The conceptionless essence, sugatagarbha,
Is not within the scope of logicians....

There it says that the absolute, luminous nature of the twelve levels³⁶²
is non-conceptual mind that transcends [the concepts of] logicians, the
absolute [basic] goodness of the Buddha-garbha,³⁶³ essentially free from
all extremes of [conceptualized] virtue, the ground that is the ultimate
refuge, and the pristine wisdom of buddhahood that is taught as
sugatagarbha. That ultimate excludes all faults that conflict with it.
Likewise, the glorious *Vajra Peak Tantra* says:

The [manifest] essence, [pure] sugatagarbha itself,
[Abiding in] the great manner of dharmadhātu,
Never covered by the mud of afflictions,³⁶⁴
Is conferred by the vajra and lotus empowerments.³⁶⁵

Also, it says:

A lotus is not sullied by water [it grows in].
Nor is it polluted by filth and mud.³⁶⁶
Similarly, all sentient beings are pure,³⁶⁷
As the [true] nature of [all] phenomena,
Dharmadhātu, unborn from the beginning.

This, which is [also called] tathāgatagarbha,
Is emptiness of dharmas [in] dharmatā,³⁶⁸
Which yet is maintained to be the nature and suchness,
Of all relative dharmas, those of form, and so forth.

Also:

All absolute phenomena are pure,
And so, they are by nature free from faults.
Yet, the beginningless essence of phenomena³⁶⁹
Is afflicted by [countless] incidental defilements.

I alone am the great phenomenon.³⁷⁰
 As I am explained as the essence of phenomena,
 I am the great king of all phenomena.

And:

Eternal, pure sugatagarbha
 Is called the essence of beings.
 I³⁷¹ am sugatagarbha.
 All sentient beings are like me.

This text teaches that the absolute buddha abides as the true selfhood of all relative buddhas and beings. Thus, unborn sugatagarbha, the suchness of things from the beginning, abides within all sentient beings without distinction. However, it is uncontaminated by their faults. To maintain that sugatagarbha does not really abide like that contradicts this teaching of [the Vajra Peak]. Likewise, the glorious *Revelation of the Intention Tantra* says:

It was said by the Buddha that sugatagarbha
 Is the pure nature of [all] phenomena.
 This is the highest, enlightened action of those
 Who benefit by mantric activity.

That teaches that the highest activity of mantra is manifesting the garbha of buddhahood, the profound reality that is the pure nature of phenomena. Also, Expressing the Absolute Names of Mañjuśrī speaks of, “the great garbha that is buddhahood,” saying: “that is the garbha of all the tathāgatas,” teaching by those words that the absolute kāya of pristine wisdom is sugatagarbha. Also, the emanation of the protector lord Avalokiteśvara, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, says:

The great, changeless, absolute emptiness that is not empty of itself, but is empty of other, the yoga that mixes the five self-arising pristine wisdoms into one [reality and that] unites both the ground and the fruition, is sugatagarbha.

Also, the glorious *Kālacakra Tantra* says:

The [absolute] mind that is the luminous nature of a sentient being is Buddhahood. A great Buddha other than that does not exist in this world realm.

That is, a great buddha who is something other than the luminous nature of mind does not exist in the world. Also, it says there:

The luminous nature, the great bliss, the wish-fulfilling gem that abides in the mind, is not seen by sentient beings who have the karma of evil deeds, due to the power of fruition of their non-virtue. That is not the fault of the wish-fulfilling gem, but of these sentient beings themselves; because all sentient beings must fully experience the [karmic] fruitions of their virtuous and non-virtuous

actions.

When **the pure nature of a being's own** mind is purified **of incidental defilements**, that person, **possessing the two purities**, becomes a lord of victorious ones. What more could a victorious one who is someone else do?

These words say that, within incidentally created relative mind, abides the luminous mind that is the essence of the natural state. That essence is like a wish-fulfilling gem. It is attained simply by cessation of the entire assembly of incidental defilements. **Suchness is absolute passion that is freed from relative passion**. Then it abides as manifest sugatagarbha. **Maintaining that sugatagarbha is really non-existent** contradicts [those teachings]. Likewise, the *Vajra Tent of the Ḍākinīs* says:

Since grasper and grasped are naturally unestablished,
When grasping self and other is abandoned,
There is the pristine wisdom of self-awareness,³⁷²
The highest nature of both things and non-things,³⁷³
Equal, empty space that is free from dust,³⁷⁴
The unification of passionlessness and passion,³⁷⁵
Seamlessly merging prajñā and skillful means.³⁷⁶

That itself is unchanging excellence.
That pervades all the animate and inanimate.
That itself is the life of living beings.³⁷⁷
That is the Buddha's pristine wisdom within them.³⁷⁸
That itself is called the glorious heruka.

Also, the glorious *Two Sections, The Hevajra Tantra*, says:

That itself is the absolute maṇḍala circle,³⁷⁹
Having the nature of five-fold pristine wisdom.³⁸⁰
Absolute form is mirror-like pristine wisdom
Aspects of things are the wisdom of equality.
Ultimate truth is discriminating wisdom.
That, as the wisdom of persistent action,³⁸¹
Is dharmadhātu that is utterly pure
That Is "I"³⁸², the lord of the maṇḍala.
That itself is the selfless yoginī **Nairātmyā**,³⁸³
Having the nature of [ultimate] dharmadhātu.

Also:

That itself is great pristine wisdom itself,
Abiding in the bodies of all beings,
In a manner that is both dual and non-dual;³⁸⁴
The principal nature of real things and non-things,³⁸⁵
Abiding pervading the animate and inanimate,
And also maintained to have illusory form.³⁸⁶

And **also, regarding sugatagarbha**:

That itself is the life of living beings,³⁸⁷
 As well as the holy syllables themselves.³⁸⁸
 That itself is the absolute nature of beings.³⁸⁹
 That is the pervader of everything,
 Abiding within the bodies of all beings.
 Both real things and non-things arise from it.³⁹⁰

The *Sublime Exposition Tantra* also says of sugatagarbha:

That itself is the great life of sentient beings.
 That itself is changeless, holy Truth.
 That is the creator of omniscience.
 That abides in the bodies of all beings.
 That is the pristine wisdom of buddhahood,
 That is said to be the glorious Heruka.

Also, the *Expression of Mañjuśrī's Absolute Names* says:

Unspoken A is the best of all syllables,
 The changeless, great meaning that is true and holy,
 That is the unborn, great life of all beings,
 The syllable that abandons verbal expression,
 And yet is the highest cause of all expression.³⁹¹

These citations say that the dhātu of the self-arisen five pristine wisdoms, pervading everything animate and inanimate, is the nature [of things], expressed by the maṇḍala circle, the heruka who is the lord of the maṇḍala, the syllable A, [from which all such symbolic communication arises,] and so forth. These are taught as the great life of all living beings.

The glorious *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, and so forth, teach sugatagarbha as the great mind that is the absolute, by such sayings as, “the great mind of all sentient beings.” Moreover, *Expressing the Names of Mañjuśrī* says, “The great offering, the great desire.” That and similar sayings teach sugatagarbha as the great afflictive emotions of [absolute] passion, aversion, stupidity, and so forth. The glorious *Kālacakra*, ascertaining what these great phenomena are, says:

The forms of the relative enlightened family are impaired from the beginning. Their ground is taught to be the “great form.” That is Vairocana and the mirror-like pristine wisdom.

When there is the suffering of saṃsāra, feeling that is impaired from the beginning, its ground is the great feeling. That is Ratnasambhava and the pristine wisdom of equality....

There, and so forth, it is taught that, whenever the skandhas, constituents, sense sources, and so forth, are taught to be “great,” the meaning is that they are aspects of the absolute great self that is the great emptiness. These [great phenomena] also have the meaning of sugatagarbha. If sugatagarbha did not exist, there would be the absurd consequence that these too did not exist.

Objection: If “sugatagarbha” and “the dhātu of selfhood” are synonymous, they are no different than the universal self of the Indian extremists. If they are not synonymous, Indian extremists attached to a self cannot be led by these terms to the Buddhist teachings.

Answer: There is no such fault. “Sugatagarbha” and “the dhātu of selfhood” are indeed synonymous. They both refer to the absolute ground that is the self of suchness, purity, and so forth. [Unlike the self of the Indian extremists,] that ground is empty of the two kinds of relative selfhood [of individuals and phenomena].

(3). **Reasons that Establish Why, If the Pure Self and So Forth were Really Non-Existent There Would be Absurd Consequences**

Objection: The existence of your alleged “dhātu of selfhood, great self, pure self,” and so forth, is impossible, because the existence of [any] selfhood is impossible.

Answer: [As you say,] if selfhood is impossible, the selfhood of suchness and purity is impossible too. Then so are all the following from the tantras:

Vajra, self-born from vajra,
Solitary, solid, hard vajra self,
The supreme self of awareness and knowables,
Unmoving self, utterly pure,
Supreme reality, the self of all the buddhas,
The self of beings, as soon as they are born,
The master of space, who is variously revealed,
The ultimate master³⁹² of all worldly lords,
The pervasive self, who is the supreme of all jewels,
The pervasive self, with committed awareness, samaya,
The pervasive self, with a jeweled parasol,
The highest selfhood of all continuums,³⁹³
The utterly awakened, awakened self.

And similarly, what is said in the *Guyhasamāja*:

...the pure self of the supreme, fortunate, absolute Buddha...

And:

Phenomena of the self that is not consciousness
Are those of the changeless self that is absolute truth.

And:

The lord of the vajras is explained [as the lord]
Of the six that are the vajra of form, and so forth.³⁹⁴

And:

The meditator in vajra meditation³⁹⁵

Is the self that is great buddhahood,
 Who is the attainer within this very life
 Of mastery over all the different worlds

Also, the glorious *Tantra of the Unsullied* says:

The self that is the embodiment of all buddhas
 Will quickly bestow the blessings of its nature.
 The self that is the embodiment of all buddhas
 Is the self that binds together all the buddhas.

All these would be impossible, [if selfhood is impossible]. The Omniscient One does not teach a self that exists as [something] other [than phenomena] **in the natural state**, nor do we. He taught this [great self] by a great many names, so do not be fooled by the mere words, but rely on the meaning.

With the intention of absolute, self-arising pristine wisdom, [true] selfhood whose continuity is never broken, the [absolute] ground that is empty of the two kinds of [relative] selfhood; the exponent of Greater Madhyamaka, the noble one Asaṅga said, quoting the Buddha:

“A self of individuals and phenomena is non-existent, but the ground in which these two kinds of self are empty or non-existent is always unbrokenly existent.” When the meaning of that statement has been realized, it should be understood in terms of the two senses of emptiness that apply to the two truths. The intention is that the existent is the absolute ground of emptiness and the non-existent is the mere emptiness of the relative within the absolute, the Blessed One said, “Know the existent as existent and the non-existent as non-existent, as they truly are.”

Moreover, though the absolute buddha is perfection of self, that kind of self is not like a worldly self. The *Great Drum Sūtra* says:

Selflessness was taught to destroy worldly ones' attachment to self. If the Teacher's teachings **of selflessness** were not taught like that, why would he not be **the same as** a villager? The blessed Buddha became famous for **teaching selflessness as an antidote** for attachment. Amazement arose at that. After that, by hundreds and thousands of causes and reasons, [his hearers] were made to enter the teachings of the two kinds of selflessness. When they had been made to enter like that, faith arose in them that **my teachings of selflessness were superior to their former teachings that selfhood existed**. When they entered into them, they studied these teachings of emptiness. They were assiduous. They were diligent.

Then, after that, I taught them that ultimate liberation is eternal peace that is present from the beginning, and that this peace has form. That **teaching of a pure self** was taught. **Thus, I successively taught that selfhood did not and did exist.**

Moreover, some worldly people said, “**Compounded** liberation **really and truly** exists.” To refute their view, I taught that [compounded] liberation does not exist at all. If, I did not teach like that, doing away with their teaching **that compounded liberation exists**, how would they believe the Teacher’s teachings that compounded liberation was non-existent in the fundamental nature? Therefore, I taught selflessness, with hundreds and thousands of causes and reasons, as a means of doing away with [their view of] compounded liberation.

However, foolish people are ruined when they see a view that does away with liberation. **They think that if relative liberation does not exist, [absolute] liberation that realizes the profound way things are does not exist either.** Therefore, after that, with hundreds and thousands of causes and reasons, I taught that liberation exists.

Also:

If I just taught at the beginning that self exists, who would have faith in it? If they did have faith **in that teaching**, they would grasp the [ordinary, relative] self, with a view of that destructible collection as real, according to the general way of the world. My teaching would be taken as [advocating] that kind of worldly grasping of a self.

To give a brief example, my way of teaching is like a person in the region of Campaka, **who, due to skill in means, accomplishes excellent, beneficial purposes by speaking earlier and later words that are apparently contradictory.**

I taught at first that self does not exist, intending **the self of relative individuals and phenomena**; later I taught that self does exist, intending **the absolute ground**. I explained a **pure self**, and that suchness is that kind of self. Therefore, Kāśyapa, this **successive teaching of selflessness and self** should be regarded as skillful means.

For example, Kāśyapa, while a man was going on a highway to a remote hermitage, a bird called “very harmful” gave its cry. Hearing the cry of that bird as he traveled on the road, that man thought, “What is this? Is there a bandit here?” The man in whom that erroneous thought arose was afraid that there might be a bandit there. Because of that, he strayed onto another road. He was led to a solitary place where there were tigers, and there he suffered for his impropriety.

Likewise, Kāśyapa, in future time, there will be monks, nuns, and male and female lay disciples who are frightened by the mere words “me” and “mine.” Viewing worldly destructible collections, they will think that there is no self **within them at all**. They will come to have the view that the great emptiness is nothingness, **in which everything is self-empty**. They will have no faith in **profound**,

especially exalted sūtras like this [Great Drum Sūtra] teaching a permanent Tathāgata and a permanent Buddha.

Also:

Those to whom profound, especially exalted sūtras like this should not be explained by those who aspire to help people by teaching them are like this: Those to whom other, ordinary sūtras have been taught and explained, sūtras whose chapters on emptiness say that everything is self-empty. When such sentient beings have seen and heard many such sūtras that teach self-emptiness, those beings will study them. When they have studied them, [later, when] they hear profound, especially exalted sūtras like this [Great Drum Sūtra, sūtras] teaching a permanent tathāgatagarbha and Tathāgata, these individuals with mere intellectual understanding of self-emptiness, will gain only hesitation and doubt. Their ideas will become immeasurably perverse. They will think, “There is no kind of emptiness but self-emptiness,” and “[Since all phenomena are empty of themselves,] what is self-empty [includes] the absolute, dharmakāya, mahāmudrā, and self-arising pristine wisdom.” They will think that recognizing self-emptiness is enough. [They will think that] they are going to be liberated [just] by recognizing that.

And:

Kāśyapa, sūtras having various intentions are taught to sentient beings who have various preferences about teachings that there is emptiness or not, that the self exists or not, and so forth. [When these sūtras are taught,] some who are lazy, with broken discipline that does not restrain body, speech, and mind, will reject profound, especially exalted sūtras like this one that teach a permanent tathāgatagarbha and Buddha. They will [prefer to] study sūtras whose chapters on emptiness teach self-emptiness alone. Some of these will be led by the words and syllables to meanings that are not the intended meaning. Some of these will agree that the words and syllables [of sūtras like this one should be rejected]. Later they will say that the definitive meaning that they have all rejected is only provisional, and so forth.

Why so? Emptiness and selflessness are taught in all of the Buddha’s teachings. Foolish people who do not understand the meaning of emptiness and selflessness are harmed by that. Citing these teachings as their reason, they will abandon tathāgatagarbha empty of other. They will not know [that the emptiness that was taught is synonymous with] absolute suchness, the ground of emptiness of the relative. They will not know [that these teachings refer to] the luminous nature, [the absolute, true self that is] empty of the two kinds of [relative] selfhood [of individuals and phenomena].

Also, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

To tame extremists I taught saying that there are no selves, no individuals, no sentient beings, no living beings, no beings with powers of mind,³⁹⁶ no persons,³⁹⁷ no knower, no seer, no action and no actor.

O monks, when extremists speak of “self,” the letters are like the mindless tracks of an insect.³⁹⁸ **That is because they do not speak from excellent realization of the perfectly established self that is the nature of phenomena.** Therefore, in order to tame sentient beings, the Tathāgata teaches, “There is no self in the Buddhadharma.” **His intention is the two relative selfhoods of individuals and phenomena.**

Because the Buddha knew the times, **earlier** he taught “no self.” That was because a cause and conditions existed **of benefiting those to be tamed** by teaching that. However, later, [for the same reason,] he taught that **the pure self of suchness** existed. **His earlier and later teachings seemed to be mutually contradictory, but their intentions were not. In teaching these intentions,** the Buddha was like a skilled physician who knows when milk is a suitable medicine and when it is not. **His teaching seemingly contradictory teachings earlier and later is like that.**

The Buddha’s teaching [of self] was not like the self-grasping of lowly child-like beings. The self-grasped by lowly child-like beings³⁹⁹ is said to be the size of a thumb, a mustard seed, an atom, **and many other sizes.** When the Tathāgata spoke of the “self” that is the absolute ground of emptiness, it was not like **what was imputed by these Indian extremists.**

When I taught, “All phenomena are selfless,” in reality, **the absolute “self” that is the ground of emptiness** was not non-existent. The phenomenon called “self” was true, real, eternal, abiding, sovereign, changeless, and indestructible. **The absolute ground of emptiness that was like** that was called “the true self.” [So speaking was] like a great physician being knowledgeable about [when to employ] milk as medicine.

Also, it says there, “Selflessness is saṃsāra. Self is the Tathāgata.” **That is, the saṃsāric relative never existed, like the horns of a rabbit. The** eternally existent **self** that is nirvāṇa **is the absolute ground of that emptiness.** Also, it says there “Self means buddhahood.” Many other such passages praise the pure self in many ways.

(4). **Teaching Reasons Why, Though Self and No Self Appear to be Contradictory, There is No Fault**

The Buddha’s later teachings of a self may seem to contradict his earlier teachings of selflessness, but, as the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* teaches, there is no such fault:

Child of noble family, in my earliest turning of the wheel of Dharma

in Vāraṇasi, impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and selflessness were taught, **with the [hidden] intention that these applied to the incidental defilements of the relative.**

Now, as I turn the wheel of Dharma here in Kuśīnagara, I teach permanence, bliss, self, and complete purity, **with the [clear] intention that these apply to absolute sugatagarbha.**

Also:

Child of noble family, the selfhood **that is the absolute ground of emptiness** – the eternal, blissful, **changeless nature** – is called “the reality of pure truth.”

And:

Uncompounded suchness is the great nirvāṇa. The permanent is nirvāṇa. The permanent is **the absolute ground of emptiness** [that is the true] self. The [true] self is complete purity. Complete, **natural purity from the beginning** is called “bliss.” Bliss, selfhood, and complete purity, **the dhātu of eternity**, is the Tathāgata, **the absolute ground of emptiness.**

And:

Child of noble family, “self” means tathāgatagarbha. The buddha nature existing within all sentient beings, **the absolute ground of emptiness**, is the meaning of “self.”

And:

Buddha nature [is existent] by its very nature, and it cannot be made non-existent. The nature of “self” is the secret essence of the Tathāgata. That secret essence cannot be destroyed and rendered non-existent by anything at all. It is the dhātu of unconquerable nāda, primordial sound.⁴⁰⁰

And:

The characterization of [the true] self that is world-transcending **by its primordial nature** is that it is “buddha nature.” To apprehend, **or realize, the absolute ground of emptiness** as such a self is said to be “extremely excellent.”

And:

One power of a tathāgata sees forms, hears sounds, smells odors, savors tastes, feels touchables, and knows the [non-dual] phenomena **of the absolute ground of emptiness.** However, **in the mode of appearance** within the six sense powers of a tathāgata, **relative** forms are not seen, **relative** sounds are not heard, **relative** odors are not smelled, **relative** tastes are not savored, **relative** touchables are not felt and **relative** phenomena are not known, **because their natures are not established.**

By not appearing to pristine wisdom, relative form, and so forth, **are naturally realized as non-existent; while, [by appearing to pristine wisdom,] absolute form, and so forth, are [naturally] realized as real.** Because the [absolute] sense powers are [real] powers, they exercise power. Such powers are called the “great self” **of the great selfhood....**

Also, the *Great Cloud Sūtra* teaches extensively:

For sentient beings who praise impermanence, emptiness, selflessness, and the [vacuous] “complete nirvāṇa” **of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas**, there is this comprehensive teaching of reality: The greatness of the buddha qualities, **great**, complete nirvāṇa, is eternal, enduring, and stable. It abides **from the beginning** as the nature of peace....

Also, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, as translated by Devacandra, says:

In a contest of strength between two wrestlers, a precious vajra jewel⁴⁰¹ sank into a wound on the forehead of one of them, without his noticing; and he thought it was lost. When a physician removed the gem and showed it to him, he was wonderstruck. Taking that as an example, the Buddha spoke saying, “Like that [jewel], tathāgatagarbha exists within all sentient beings, but sentient beings do not know that.”

And:⁴⁰²

Just as there was a vajra jewel in the wrestler’s body, but with impaired apprehensions, he thought it was lost; worldly sentient beings, who do not realize the suchness that is their true self, come under the power of non-virtuous companions. Not knowing the intention [of the Buddha’s words, some of them] meditate on selflessness, even though the [true] self **that is the absolute ground of emptiness** exists.

They rely on their non-virtuous companions. They do not understand the ultimate intention of words of the teachings. While they meditate chanting, “There is no self, there is no self,” they do not know **the ground of** suchness in which **the two kinds** of relative self are absent.⁴⁰³

Those who do not meditate on selflessness [like that] meditate on a worldly self, **like the Hindus who say the self is the size of a thumb, and so on.** While they say, “The worldly self exists,” they do not realize **the suchness of** that selfhood. It is the same as the suchness of the world-transcending self. They speculate, “Where does the self exist? In what does it abide? Is it like a pot in a pot? Is it pervasive like moisture? Is it like the ornament between the eyebrows of the bewildered wrestler?”

Then the Tathāgata, **like the capable physician in the sūtra story**, speaks to them saying, “The self **that is the absolute ground of**

emptiness does not abide as, or appear as, anything at all, [for ordinary beings]. It is like a precious jewel with a luminous nature that is obscured by phenomena of the afflictive emotions.

When [the Tathāgata] speaks those words to them, those sentient beings become faithful, [knowing that] they need only exhaust the afflictive emotions [that depend on grasping relative selfhood]. Then, like the wrestler seeing his vajra jewel **after it was retrieved by the capable physician**, they can see tathāgatagarbha. Child of noble family, tathāgatagarbha is **inconceivable, and its qualities are** immeasurable.

Just as the king's capable physician in the sūtra story at first forbids his using milk as a medicine, but later says it is quite appropriate; this story is an example of the Buddha's earlier and later teachings being [seemingly] contradictory. The Buddha, the king of physicians, due to the [interests and] powers of apprehension of those to be tamed, first teaches selflessness. Later he teaches that dharmadhātu exists as the true self. The same text says:

[The Teacher first] delineated the Dharma Word by saying, "Selflessness is the Word of the Buddha," because of the limited powers of apprehension of those to be tamed. After that occasion of teaching that all phenomena are selfless, knowing that the time had come to benefit his hearers [with further teachings,] like an excellent physician, the Buddha truly taught that the absolute self exists.

That [true] self is not like the self of worldly ones that is said to be the size of a thumb or a millet grain. Nor is it like worldly beings' view of the self. For all [relative] phenomena here [in saṃsāra], a self **of individuals and a self of phenomena** are taught to be non-existent. However, phenomena **of the absolute ground of emptiness** are not selfless. The self **that is the absolute ground of emptiness** is suchness. That self is eternity itself, quality itself, endurance itself, stability itself, and peace itself.

Thus, like the excellent physician with medicinal milk, the Tathāgata earlier taught selflessness, but later taught **the true self of** suchness. The four kinds of retinue, **monks, nuns and male and female lay disciples**, should try to meditate on that.

And:

A mother rubbed on her nipples a bitter ointment of nimpa leaves. Until the medicinal oil prescribed for her baby was digested, she did not allow it to suckle, [because that would harm it;] but after the oil was digested, she cleaned the ointment from her nipples and allowed it [again].

Taking this as an example, the Buddha spoke saying, Child of noble family, due to the powers of apprehension of those to be tamed, like

the physician who prescribed the child's medicinal oil that is to be digested, I said, "O monks, meditate on all phenomena as selfless. When you have meditated like that, grasping a self will be abandoned. When grasping an I is completely abandoned, nirvāṇa will be attained." I said that in order to overcome monks' view of a worldly self, [prepare to] teach authentically the greatness of the non-dual world-transcending self, and teach authentically the falsity of saying that the worldly self is suchness, make the body completely pure by meditating on the **two** selves [of individuals and phenomena] as non-existent.

Like the child's mother who rubbed bitter nimba leaves on her nipples, I said, "Meditate on all phenomena as selfless and empty."

Later, the child's mother washed her nipples. She said to her child, "Until the medicinal oil you drank could be digested, you could not be nourished at my nipples, but now you may suckle."

In order to turn those to be tamed from a Dharma view of a worldly self, I too taught, "The two kinds of [relative] self are non-existent." However, that said, now I teach, "Sugatagarbha, **the pure self of absolute suchness**, exists."

O monks, after the mother washed her nipples, her child would not suckle at first, even though it was allowed, because it feared the bitter taste of nimba. When that child had well examined whether its mother's nipples still had the bitter taste, [determining that they did not,] it became fearless. Then again, it suckled as before.

O monks, you should realize that you always abide in the ground of the perfectly established nature of phenomena that is empty of the imagined and the dependent. Well examining the thought, "Tathāgatagarbha exists within us," you should try to meditate accordingly. That is what I teach now.

And:

Some phenomena, **those of the imagined and dependent**, do not have the selfhood **of the fundamental nature of the way things are**. Some phenomena, those **of the perfectly established nature of phenomena**, do have that selfhood.

For example, people living on the earth who do not have the divine eye, cannot see the track of a bird flying in the sky. Likewise, those who abide among the afflictive emotions cannot see without help the supreme sugata essence that exists within them. Therefore, with a hidden intention,⁴⁰⁴ I taught such [people] the words "self does not exist." Though the existence of their true self, the nature of phenomena, is established within them, sentient beings without the divine eye cannot see it, because of obscurations due to the afflictive emotions. So say I.

Those words, and so forth, say that, according to the intention of the Buddha's earlier teachings of the second turning, when something is said to be non-existent in something, itself or another thing, whatever is said to be non-existent **is non-affirmingly negated as self-empty and just non-existent.**

The later [third-turning] teachings of non-emptiness, saying that the self exists, and so forth, have the intention that what remains after [the application of non-affirming] negation **is the subject of an affirming negation. It is affirmed to exist as the ground of the non-affirming [negation], non-existence, and emptiness of what is other than itself.**

These earlier and later teachings seem to be contradictory; but when they are well examined, they are not contradictory [at all]. That is because the ground in which something is non-affirming negated is simultaneously affirmed as existing by an affirming negation.⁴⁰⁵

This is also true because the [absolute] ground is primordially and essentially pure of all naturally abandoned, [relative] faults. The ground always abides as perfectly established pristine wisdom pervading space, complete with all the qualities of the authentic natural state. **Renunciation and realization and the two accumulations [of merit and pristine wisdom] are naturally complete within this primordially perfect enlightenment. All this is naturally established and spontaneously present.**

Thus, we need to be knowledgeable about the meanings of particular teachings, as intentions within the great intention. This is accomplished through experiential realization of the instructions of the glorious bodhisattvas of the tenth level, and correctly depending on the four reliances.

(5). **Teaching That Pure Self, AHAM, and So Forth, are Synonymous**

Similarly, the *Mahāmudrā Drops Tantra* says:

A self within all things,
Established dharmatā,
Pervasively exists.
Otherwise beings would be
Like a tree whose root is severed.⁴⁰⁶

Also, the glorious *Full Expression of the Vajra Garland that Completely Reveals the Essence of all the Tantras*⁴⁰⁷ says:

AHAM by its pervasion of all things
Exists in a way that is superior.⁴⁰⁸
A person who is separate from AHAM
Would be like a tree that is cut off from its roots

Also, the glorious Drops of Pristine Wisdom Tantra says:

Your non-existence as self that is not ‘other’
 By even a buddha would be hard to find.
 If you were non-existent, the three-fold realm⁴⁰⁹
 Would be like a person whose head has been cut off.⁴¹⁰

There, and so forth, it is taught how even the buddhas cannot find the non-existence of the absolute, [true] self that is the nature of phenomena, and how there would be many great faults if it were non-existent. The victorious Maitreya says in his *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle*:

When emptiness is completely purified,⁴¹¹
 By attainment of the selfless higher self,⁴¹²
 Since the buddhas attain⁴¹³ that [true], pure self,
 They become that self that is the great selfhood.

Vasubandhu’s commentary says:

That immaculate **absolute** space is taught to be the supreme self of the buddhas. Why? Because it is **the ground that is** the supreme self that is without the **two kinds of** [relative] self. That selfless ground is supreme suchness. It is **primordially**, completely pure **by nature**. By that also being svābhavikakāya, it is the self of the buddhas.

When that naturally pure space of dharmadhātu is completely pure of incidental defilements, the buddhas attain [realization of] that primordially pure self that is **the ground** of selflessness [of the relative]. Because the buddhas have attained the pure self, they become that self that is the great selfhood. With that intention, the immaculate, absolute space of dharmadhātu is postulated as the supreme self of the buddhas.

The *Sublime Continuum* says:

Attaining [in realization] perfection of the qualities of purity, self, bliss, and permanence is the fruition of separation,⁴¹⁴
 sugatagarbha.

Also:

This is the true self, where all proliferations
 of self and selflessness are fully pacified.⁴¹⁵

Also, the great accomplished master Sūryagupta says, in his *Praise of Tārā*:

The attainer of purity, bliss, self, and permanence is dharmakāya
 that has no birth, sickness, old age, and death.

The ground empty of the two kinds of selfhood, the perfectly established nature of phenomena, is taught to be the dhātu that is the nature and self of the buddhas. Just that is taught in the glorious *Drops of Mahāmudrā Tantra* to be AHAM, the ultimate:

Listen while I explain the definitive meaning of “self.”⁴¹⁶
 A, the best form of letters,⁴¹⁷ exists in the bodies of all.⁴¹⁸

That is the best of all aspects, supremely⁴¹⁹ abiding excellence,
Existing, **pervasive in** all, unborn from a cause, omniscient,⁴²⁰
Eternally empty **ground**,⁴²¹ all-pervading, **absolute truth**,
Single master of rising, that is all and all.⁴²²
Arising as **aspects other than** the world and its selfhood,⁴²³
This blissful **absolute** is the nirmāṇakāya⁴²⁴ Buddha
of **absolute** kāya, and since it grants refuge to the frightened,
The essence has the power to benefit all beings.

The **absolute** syllable HAM is without any relative form,⁴²⁵
Existing in bodies, yet not arising from the body,⁴²⁶
Free from all relative things, but manifesting all aspects,
Beautiful form⁴²⁷ of all, but without the minor marks,⁴²⁸

[This is] completely liberated from things and non-things,⁴²⁹
Creating birth and destruction, as their essential being,⁴³⁰
Characterized as the subsiding of all things **into the ground**,⁴³¹
With the nature of dharmakāya, mind bestows vajra refuge.

All syllables and letters do not exist at all.⁴³²
The aspect empty of relative things, exists as nirvāṇa.⁴³³
Its nature is the **self-risen** kāyas of pristine wisdom,
Always undefiled, inexpressible, and at peace,
That is fully proclaimed to be the syllable HAM.

This self, AHAM, within **all objects at all times**,
Always abides as the self of all **phenomena**.

Also:

Having the **absolute**⁴³⁴ syllable HAM at its end and boundary,
The **absolute** syllable A abides as the pure, **vajra** moon.⁴³⁵
The **absolute** syllable HAM is the light of the vajra sun.⁴³⁶
The **absolute** syllable A abides as the support.⁴³⁷
The **absolute** syllable HAM is said to be the supported.
The **absolute** syllable A is said to be the life.⁴³⁸
The **absolute** syllable HAM is mindfulness of exertion.⁴³⁹
Whoever unifies **A and HAM** in their **natural** place,
That person is explained to be the absolute self.
In all the tantras that, which is difficult to find,⁴⁴⁰
Is said to be the true self, which also is that Word.⁴⁴¹

Also, the glorious *Vajra Garland Tantra* says:

AHAM is complete, **primordial** liberation.⁴⁴²
A, having the aspects of all things,⁴⁴³
That completely abides within all bodies,
Possessing all the aspects that are supreme,
Pervading **all the animate and inanimate**,
Knowing all **knowables**, and never exhausted,
Is said to be without beginning and end.⁴⁴⁴

It is the essence that is the single, uncreated

creator of all aspects and of all phenomena.⁴⁴⁵
 Arising at all times and pervading all times,⁴⁴⁶
 Supreme nirmāṇakāya,⁴⁴⁷ capable of all goals,
 Its qualities are the release of the tathāgata.⁴⁴⁸

Absolute HAM is the ground free from all things,
 Though in the body, not rising from the body.
 Transcending the **interdependent** senses, not manifest⁴⁴⁹
 Manifesting all aspects,⁴⁵⁰ abandoning aspects,⁴⁵¹
 Liberated from both things and non-things,⁴⁵²
 Not abiding as anything further than those,
 Nor as nothingness, nor in causal relationship,
 The **primordial ground** of subsiding of all things
 That is the intrinsic essence of dharmakāya.
 Great mind has been released as Vajradhara,
 Free from [all] production **and effort** of goals.

Empty nature, [that is also] nirvāṇa,
 Nature that is the kāyas of pristine wisdom,
 This is renowned as being the syllable HAM.

AHAM, that is a presence⁴⁵³ pervading all.
 Always abides as the self of all phenomena.⁴⁵⁴

Also, the glorious *Drops of Pristine Wisdom Tantra* says:

Absolute goddess, divinity, you have not arisen.⁴⁵⁵
 Without arising or change, **you are superior**.
 Completely free from the power of conceptuality,
 Your intrinsic essence is pure and **luminous** pristine wisdom.
 The self exists as the kāya of your pristine wisdom.
 You are supreme,⁴⁵⁶ O lady, abiding as **clear light**.

Also:

'Other' than or outside the countless world realms,
 You are the shining light of pristine wisdom.
 You **manifest** the phenomena of all things.
 You are the selfhood and arising of all.⁴⁵⁷
Said to completely know all phenomena,
 You are [greatly] renowned as being omniscient....

That has the same meaning as what is taught in the glorious *Two Sections, the Hevajra Tantra*:

From me⁴⁵⁸ all sentient beings arise.
 From me the three realms too arise.
 I am the pervader of all this.
 No other nature of beings is seen.

And:

The explainer **of Dharma** is I, and the Dharma is also I.⁴⁵⁹

The listeners with their own collections⁴⁶⁰ are also I.
 The Teacher of the World⁴⁶¹ and what is accomplished⁴⁶² are I.
 The world and the world transcending too are I.⁴⁶³
 The nature of coemergent joy is I myself.

Also, the *Vajra Tent of the Ḍākinīs Tantra*, [within the *Hevajra* cycle,] says:

“What is enlightened suchness like?”
 “It is **self-arising** omniscience.”
 What is that? Is it physical?”
 “That it is like that is true.”
 “How so?”

The vajra holder spoke saying, “I, **Absolute Hevajra**, am this **Dharma** body that is adorned with the **absolute** thirty-two major marks and eighty minor marks. Why so? These marks are **attained and** established by the cause of attaining and accomplishing these **absolute** objects **that also makes pristine wisdom manifest in one’s continuum.**”

Vajrapāṇi asked, “How? Is the Blessed One material?”

The vajra holder spoke saying, “**I am not material.** I am the mirror-like pristine wisdom.”

“What is the mirror-like pristine wisdom like?”

The vajra holder spoke saying, “it is not true **relatively**, but it is not false **absolutely**. It is not to be accepted, but it is not to be rejected; **because it transcends [truth, falsity and] objects that can be accepted or rejected.**

I am also the pristine wisdom of equality.
 I am also discriminating pristine wisdom.
 I am also the pristine wisdom of persistent action.
 I am also the pristine wisdom of dharmadhātu.

Therefore, bodhisattva great being, do not say the words,
 ‘Enlightenment is a non-thing,’ **Do not say that it is essenceless; like some deluded ones who say the Buddha is non-existent, empty, cleared away, and so forth. Why not?**

Non-things and things alike are I myself.⁴⁶⁴
 The Tathāgata is primordial liberation,
 Possessing, **by its nature**, the highest kāyas,
 The absolute kāyas that are profound and extensive.⁴⁶⁵

I am the great being that is Heruka.
 I am united with my consort Nairātmyā.⁴⁶⁶
 Not material, I am great bliss, AHAM.
 To participate in the world, I am material.⁴⁶⁷
 I pervade men, women, and the androgynous.
 I pervade the five kinds of sentient beings.⁴⁶⁸

Also, the glorious *Vajra Peak Tantra* says:

I alone⁴⁶⁹ am great [and absolute] Dharma.
 I am said to be essence of Dharma
 Therefore, I am the great king **of the Dharma**,
 Proclaimed as 'other' or higher than the three levels,
 Said to be 'other' or higher than the three realms.

All the beings of the realm of desire,
 As well as those of the realms of form and the formless,
 [All] those said to be denizens of the three worlds,
 All those are I alone, the self-arisen.

Discriminate suchness that is **'other' or higher
 Than** all the phenomena of grasper and grasped,
 So that the "great desire" may be searched for,
 As the dhātu primordially pure of other phenomena,

I make phenomena⁴⁷⁰ pure **of incidental defilements**,
 As they are inseparable from dharmadhātu.
 Thus, I am the great king, **[the syllable] AHAM**,
 Who is taught as the master of the three-fold world.⁴⁷¹

"As in the **realm** of desire, so in form,
 And in the formless," so these three are proclaimed
 As being inseparable from emptiness.⁴⁷²
 I am said to be pure **sugatagarbha**.

What is the significance of the three realms?
 As in the **realm** of desire, so in form,
 And in the formless, there is purity.
 The goodness **'other' or higher than** the three realms
 Is only I, who am self-arisen, **AHAM**.

This is the dhātu, the **undefiled** cause and meaning,
 The cause of the three-fold realm, along with its sattvas,⁴⁷³
 Explained as being empty, markless, and wishless,
 And said to be I, the vajra peak, AHAM.

What is the meaning of relative, cyclic existence?
 The child-like rise and cycle in saṃsāra,⁴⁷⁴
 Due to pervasive karma of the afflictions.
 [Nevertheless,] the pure nature of saṃsāra⁴⁷⁵
 Is only I, who am self-arising **AHAM**.

Not even an atom of relative dharmas exist.⁴⁷⁶
 These⁴⁷⁷ are unreal, because they are only imagined.
 They are beginningless, and they have no end.
 They do not exist. I am⁴⁷⁸ empty of them.
 That which is empty of them is I myself.
 That which is **'other' and higher than** saṃsāra
 Is victorious Vajradhara, I myself.

Say, what is 'other' and higher than nirvāṇa?⁴⁷⁹
That which is the pure emptiness of suchness,⁴⁸⁰
The excellent nature of the four [noble] truths,
Has completely rejected characteristics,
And conceptual attributes of things and forms.

That cannot be grasped by words and language.
Referents of conception are non-existent.
Therefore, only I myself, AHAM,
Can fully know nirvāṇa in [terms of] words.⁴⁸¹

And:

I am the creator and producer.⁴⁸²
I am the master of all sentient beings.
I am the master of variety.
I am the creator, producer, and forebear.

And:

I am the king, AHAM,⁴⁸³ the lord of mind.⁴⁸⁴
Why am I, AHAM, called the creator?
Taught as being "a secret" to all others,
I myself have risen from myself.

What "exists" in the worlds above and below,
And on the earth, and also in the three realms,
Is mind that is 'other' and higher than all of these.
Homeless, without relation to any phenomena.⁴⁸⁵

And:

I am also one possessing a vajra,⁴⁸⁶
Who has abandoned every suffering,⁴⁸⁷
Who has exhausted every kind of fault.
I, AHAM, am the bodhicitta vajra.

The absolute vajra peak, I am self-risen.
I am also 'other' or higher than Viṣṇu,⁴⁸⁸
by abandoning faults of fixated objects,
Pure suchness is 'other' or higher than consciousness.
Therefore, I am said to be 'other' than Viṣṇu.

Also:

Just as "suchness" has been elucidated,
I have realized the depths of Dharma.
Therefore, I myself am self-arisen.⁴⁸⁹
I am taught to be the vajra sun.
I am said to be the vajra moon.
I have realized primordial peace
That is the nature of all phenomena.

Also:

I myself am the progenitor.
 I am the 'other', higher world of desire.
 I make svābhavikakāya, sambhogakāya
 And also, nirmāṇakāya permeate all.

And:

The one who severs the noose of cyclic existence,
 I, AHAM, am the great king of saṃsāra.

And:

I, by being a holder of the three vehicles,
 Am the nature of phenomena of the three realms.

And:

The earth is supreme, as holder of other things in the world.
 So, I am supreme, as the holder of 'other' phenomena.

And:

I am, by my nature, similar⁴⁹⁰
 To what is called "the space above the earth."⁴⁹¹
 Selflessness of individuals and dharmas,⁴⁹²
 I, on earth, am said to abide as suchness.

And:

Selfless, not self, 'other' and higher than beings' selves,
 I am unborn, and have not risen from the start.
 Beings bound by the vines of saṃsāra are tormented by afflictions.
 I am the liberator and purifier of vines.

And:

As the signless and uncompounded absolute dhātu,
 I am enlightened mind that scatters, like the wind,
 All the vines and nooses that comprise saṃsāra.
 I am 'other' and higher than Maheśvara.⁴⁹³
 I am made the great lord of the vajra accumulations.⁴⁹⁴
 I, called a buddha, am another kind of lord.⁴⁹⁵
 Great amṛita, great city of liberation.
 I am that lord and empowerment of that great lord.⁴⁹⁶

And:

I am the 'other', higher yogic discipline
 I am the destroyer of the afflictions.
 By certain deliverance from old age and death
 I am called the Pure One⁴⁹⁷ of dharmatā.
 With a body that is⁴⁹⁸ the three-fold world.
 I am 'other' or higher than the three-fold world
 Of passion, aversion, and stupidity.⁴⁹⁹

I as the vajra peak, am their servant and guardian.

Also:

I am the great and excellent Six-faced One,⁵⁰⁰
I am the great wheel⁵⁰¹ that has six aspects.
These are the families of buddha, vajra, and ratna,⁵⁰²
With dharmas, karma, and the secret holder.⁵⁰³

And:

I⁵⁰⁴ explain the ultimate intention,
The great city with the nature of liberation.
I have desire for all sentient beings.⁵⁰⁵
Therefore, I am explained to be desire.⁵⁰⁶

And:

I, who am all liberated beings,
Also liberate individual beings.
Therefore, I myself, who am self-arising,
Am the king who is the holder of liberation.

And:

I am not the two selves⁵⁰⁷ and relative dharmas.
I am completely free from desirous attachment.
I am the teacher of the deathless path,
[Even] to [beings who are in] the hells.⁵⁰⁸

And:

By ripening beings' thirst for Dharma by the Dharma,
What is completely desired is attained.
They attain through me the place of joy.
My joy is 'other' and higher than risen joy.⁵⁰⁹

And:

All [the various] sentient beings are abiding
In the river of saṃsāra, hard to cross,
But they are stupefied, not knowing how;
And, so, I liberate them from that plight.

I am⁵¹⁰ desire, and the other afflictions.
Because I desire to liberate sentient beings,
In cutting off saṃsāra, I am aggressive,
In grasping the secret treasure, I am greedy
In desire for sentient beings I am passionate.
And I am the hero who ripens sentient beings.

The one who is the holder of the secret
Is the fearless child, myself, the vajra peak.
Therefore, I myself am the great secret.
I am the holder of the Dharma treasury,

The great secret of the buddhas' enlightenment.
Therefore I, **AHAM**, am the secret self.

Also, the *Hevajra Tantra* says:

This ancestral being who is the lord and self,
The nourisher **higher and 'other' than** sentient beings,
Higher and 'other' than time and the individual,
This nature of all things is purely abiding
As illusory forms, **like a mirror divination**.

There, and so forth, by many syllables, words, and phrases, a great number of profound tantras teach the ground and essence that is primordially free from [relative] things associated with the two kinds of selfhood. This absolute emptiness; by nature, luminous, capable of manifesting all phenomena, innately co-emergent with pristine wisdom, ever unbroken continuity that transcends the instantaneous; is taught to abide as the [absolute] self that is pure of [relative] self. This meaning of the great intention experienced in realization relies for its truth and purity on the profound instructions for experiencing reality well-taught by tenth level bodhisattvas like the authors of the *Trilogy of Bodhisattva Commentaries*.

(6). **Teaching That the Dhātu of the Pure Self and the Perfection of Prajñā Have the Same Meaning**

Similarly, the *Great Mother, the Perfection of Prajñā in One Hundred Thousand Stanzas*, teaches that that the unborn space of the dhātu, dharmadhātu, the inconceivable dhātu, the dhātu of self, and the dhātu of the perfection of prajñā are without difference. Teachings of completely pure self, sentient beings, and so forth, have the same meaning as those terms. The instructions about the meaning [of that purity] are that when something is without something, [the first] is pure⁵¹¹ of [the second]. The first that remains is called "the ground of purity," and that eternally abides.⁵¹²

(7). **Having Refuted Those Unskilled with the Way Things Are, the Way of Abiding of the Ground is Taught As It Is**

The *Āṅgulimāla Sūtra*, with teachings rare like the udumvāra flower,⁵¹³ says:

Then Āṅgulimāla asked Purna, the son of Maitri, what is the meaning of this verse:

By all the Buddhas and Śrāvakas,
That which none have found
That Dharma, when they are enlightened,
Should be taught to all living beings.

Purna replied:

The blessed buddhas of the past most diligently sought in all

phenomena a dhātu, a self, a life-principle, an individual, a person, and a human child of Manu,⁵¹⁴ but not finding them thought, “selflessness is the word of the Buddha,” and went beyond them.

Similarly, having said that the blessed buddhas of the present and future do not, and will not, find these, and having said the same of Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, Purna said further:

Thus, they teach that a life principle, an individual, a person, a human child of Manu, a sentient being, and a dhātu of selfhood are non-existent. Thus, they teach selflessness. Thus, they teach emptiness. Such Dharma discourse as that is taught by them.

Again, Aṅgulimāla said to Purna, the son of Maitri:

Alas, venerable Purna, you are making noises like an insect. You do not know how to teach Dharma discourse at all. An insect only knows how to emit sounds like “zi zi.” Insect-like fool that you are, say no more!

Purna, because you do not know about the hidden speech of the Tathāgata, your thinking that selflessness **alone** is the Dharma falls into the dharma of stupidity **about the true self that is the absolute ground of emptiness**, as a moth falls into a flame.

Regarding that which “the buddhas have not found,” the blessed buddhas of the past, not finding the absence of **absolute** tathāgatagarbha within all sentient beings, went beyond that. Similarly, the blessed buddhas of the present, did not find the absence of the **absolute** dhātu of self, **sugatagarbha**, within all sentient beings. Also, the blessed buddhas of the future, will not find the absence of the dhātu of sentient beings, **sugatagarbha**, within all sentient beings. The Pratyekabuddhas and Śrāvakas of the three times did not, do not, and will not find the absence of sugatagarbha within all sentient beings. That is the meaning of the stanza above.

Also, regarding that which “all the buddhas have not found,” though the blessed buddhas of the past diligently searched among all phenomena, they did not find a worldly self the size of a thumb, millet grain, rice grain, mustard seed, or sesame seed, which was red, blue, yellow, white, short, long very long, and so forth. [Such a self is] taught by Hindus and others to abide, blazing at the heart and to be permanent, stable, and ever-enduring. Not having found such a self, all the buddhas and Śrāvakas, when they became completely enlightened, taught [its absence] to living beings. That is the meaning of the stanza above. The explanation of Purna was determined as erroneous on analysis. The meaning of the sūtras is not like

that.

Also, regarding that which “the buddhas have not found,” the blessed buddhas of the past, not finding an absolute tathāgatagarbha that was produced, went beyond it, resolving that an uncreated buddha nature **or dhātu**, adorned with the excellent major and minor marks, exists within all sentient beings. The blessed buddhas of the present also, diligently searching for a produced tathāgatagarbha, do not find it; because within all sentient beings exists the uncreated dhātu of buddhahood, adorned with the limitless major and minor marks.

Insect-like Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas within the three times proclaim that tathāgatagarbha exists, but also say, “It cannot be seen with the eyes,” and they wonder what is the cause of that.

I will teach that [cause]. It is like this. Rahulaśrībhadrā applied himself attentively to training and discipline, and so he looked very carefully to see whether water had living beings in it. He thought, “Are there living beings or are there not, as it seems there is just dust, and no beings are there.” When he looked very thoroughly, he saw that there were, [in fact,] tiny living beings there.

Similarly, **tiger-like heroes**, bodhisattvas who have attained the tenth bodhisattva level, see that the absolute dhātu of self exists in their bodies as their true nature. They see the limitless dhātu like that.

Experiencing sugatagarbha like that is very difficult. Those who give up their personal lives to become teachers in this world that is as if burning everywhere and intensely burning everywhere, teach this benefit that is very hard to accomplish. I teach tathāgatagarbha to these bodhisattvas, who are **heroes like tigers**; but I do not teach it to others, **who are like foxes**.

Sentient beings themselves are tathāgatas, in the sense that **they possess tathāgatagarbha**. For example, there is unobstructed [vision] in those who have the miraculous eye. When child-like ones who have the **bubble-like** eye of flesh come together with these unobstructed ones, and [they all] look for the track of a bird in the sky; can these child-like ones with the **bubble-like** eye of flesh see the track of a bird in the sky, or is it these unobstructed elders who can clearly see it?

Persons who have the **bubble-like** eye of flesh [must] depend on such elders, and they must proceed through strong faith in them. Likewise, Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas with the **bubble-like** eye of flesh, believing in the way tathāgatagarbha is taught in all the sūtras, know that it exists; but how could

they see correctly this dhātu that is an object [fully] experienced [only] by tathāgatas? If Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas must rely on others in this case, because they cannot see tathāgatarbha for themselves; how is it believable that ordinary beings, who are like blind men [by comparison], can see it?

“Formerly, on this earth, there were four⁵¹⁵ sweets.” That is saying, “this was not taught by former truly, completely enlightened buddhas, but I have heard it.” The beings who tasted these four sweets, eating them as children, and becoming accustomed to them over a long time, even now cannot give up their delicious taste.

Similarly, sentient beings who meditated on and performed many other actions with regard to tathāgatarbha before many earlier, truly, completely enlightened buddhas, believe even now that tathāgatarbha exists. This is because those beings meditated and repaid the kindness of the tathāgatas [with practice], and not otherwise. In the future too, sentient beings who hear the teaching of tathāgatarbha and believe it will not be otherwise. The tathāgatas’ children, like whose who previously ate the four sweets on the earth, will [continue to] repay the kindness of the tathāgatas [by practice].

There, and so forth, it is extensively taught that, if we want to realize the profound ultimate meaning of this great intention, we must properly and truly hear and see this excellent, especially exalted [*Aṅgulimāla*] *Sūtra*, and then we must realize its teachings well, according to their intended meaning.

(8). **Showing the Purpose of Teaching Sugatarbha as a Seed**

Objection: If sugatarbha possesses all the limitless qualities of dharmakāya, that contradicts the teaching of it as a seed in [*Nāgārjuna’s*] *Praise of Dharmadhātu*:

This same nature of dharmas that is a seed
Is said to be the support of all phenomena.
As a result of its gradual purification,
The enlightenment of the buddhas is attained...

Answer: If you think and say, because of what is taught there, that “seed,” in that passage, means a compounded seed – as if a [relative] seed [that will grow into] liberation were being planted; dharmadhātu itself is said to be a seed there. Sugatarbha is also taught to be a seed. As the *Mahāmudrā Drops Tantra* says about this:

Moreover, listen well while I explain
What is widely known as dharmadhātu.
Space that is absolute⁵¹⁶ is dharmadhātu.
This dhātu⁵¹⁷ that is thought of as a seed,

Exists within all **relative** phenomena.⁵¹⁸
 It is both the cause and resulting highest place.⁵¹⁹
 Just as oil exists in sesame seeds,
 Just as fire exists inside of wood,
 [Dharmadhātu] exists in all phenomena.⁵²⁰
 Though it exists in all phenomena,
 As what is called a seed, it is not seen.⁵²¹

The space explained as dharmadhātu should be understood as absolute space, the realm or dhātu of space, the source of dharmas, the lotus of space, and so forth are taught to be synonyms for this absolute nature of phenomena.

“The dhātu that is thought of as a seed,” refers to an ‘other,’ absolute seed that transcends worldly examples, logic, and consciousness. Saying this has no faults of contradiction. “Exists within all **relative** phenomena” teaches, using a simile, how sugatagarbha exists like an unseen seed, inside the husk of defiled phenomena.

That has the same meaning as the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, when it also says that sugatagarbha is a seed: “In me exists the seed of becoming a buddha, called tathāgatagarbha.” Sugatagarbha is both dharmadhātu and a seed in that [absolute] sense. It cannot be a relative and compounded [source]. The intention is that it is other than and superior to an ordinary seed has no faults of contradiction. The same text also says:

Child of noble family, what is called “buddha nature,” inseparable awareness and space of the dhātu, is the seed of the Middle Way to true, complete enlightenment that overcomes the enemy.

The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, as translated by Devacandra, says:

Those with prajñā know in their thoughts, “Within my body, such a seed of dharmakaya, absolute truth, exists.” As the means of manifesting that, they apprehend no [relative] phenomena at all.

The intention of such teachings should be realized like that. Otherwise assertions like the following in Mañjuśrī’s *Short Teaching Maintaining Our Own View* would be contradictory:

The subtle **absolute that is also** a seed without corruption...

So would teaching the coming forth of the major and minor marks [in enlightenment]:

[...There come forth] limitless heaps of absolute qualities
 that are renowned as my Buddhadharmakāya.

The same would be true of the statements **taught by the exalted Avalokiteśvara** that dharmadhātu itself is Lady Mahāmudrā, the source of phenomena with the nature of the eighty-four thousand heaps of

phenomena of a buddha's powers, fearlessnesses, and so forth. Many of the scriptures cited earlier would also have to be mutually contradictory, which they are not.

(9). **Teaching How These Completely Abide in Sugatagarbha**

Thus, just as individual phenomena must each have [all of] their own defining qualities, the absolute nature of phenomena must also be complete with its own intrinsic qualities. These qualities are not just a few. They are all-inclusive, and all-pervading. The naturally complete, inseparable qualities of absolute dharmakāya must be complete in sugatagarbha as well, because the two are synonymous.

(10). **Teaching the Reason Why, Though These Qualities Always Exist in the Ground, They do not Appear in Consciousness**

Though sugatagarbha's [intrinsic] qualities always exist in the ground, sentient beings do not see them, because they are covered by incidental defilements. Absolute sugatagarbha is not an object of ordinary consciousness. It can be experienced only by the pristine wisdom of self-awareness. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

Then the bodhisattva great being Lion's Roar asked, "Blessed One, if buddha nature that is like a powerful vajra exists within all sentient beings, why are all sentient beings unable to see it?"

The Blessed One spoke saying, "Child of noble family, for example, different forms are blue, yellow, red, white, long and short; but a man obstructed by blindness cannot see them. Though indeed he cannot see them, it is not correct to say that these different forms [whose colors] are blue, yellow, red, and white, and whose shapes are long and short, do not exist. Why? Though a blind man cannot see them, they are not unseen by those with eyes.

Buddha nature is also like that. Indeed, it is unseen by all beings in whom the pristine wisdom of the path has not arisen; but bodhisattvas of the tenth level see it partially, and tathāgatas see it, without remainder. Bodhisattvas of the tenth level see it like a form at night **that is illuminated by moonlight**. Tathāgatas see it like a form in daytime.

Child of noble family, those who are partially **blind**, due to defective vision do not see forms clearly; but if a skilled doctor treats their eyes with appropriate medicine, by the power of that medicine, forms are clearly seen. Bodhisattvas of the tenth level are like that. They do indeed see the buddha nature, but it is not clear. However, by the power[ful medicine] of the meditative absorption of Going as a Hero,⁵²² they see it quite clearly.

Also:

For others it is known, but not seen. It is called "knowing, but not

seeing Buddha nature,” when beings know, by completely correct scripture and reasoning, that all sentient beings have buddha nature; but it is not seen by them, because they are overcome by afflictive emotions, so that Buddha nature is obscured for them.”

For others it is known and seen a little. Bodhisattvas abiding on the tenth bodhisattva level know that buddha nature exists and that it abides in all sentient being. They also see it unclearly, like the moon in the daytime or objects [dimly illuminated] by moonlight.

For others it is both known and [clearly] seen. These are the blessed buddhas. That is called “both knowing and seeing Buddha nature.”

And:

[It is not the case that] **great** nirvāṇa has not existed beginninglessly. If nirvāṇa did not exist beginninglessly, **it would be compounded. In that case**, it would not be an immaculate, eternally existing phenomenon. Whether **relative** buddhas arise or not, the nature of the natural state and the characteristics of the absolute ground of emptiness exist eternally. However, because sentient beings obscured by the afflictive emotions cannot see them, they wrongly think they do not exist.

Bodhisattva great beings who familiarize themselves with discipline, meditative absorption, and prajñā see **sugatagarbha**, when they cut off the afflictive emotions. Since **great** nirvana is the space of the dhātu that transcends the instantaneous, it has the quality of existing eternally. Known not to be something that was formerly non-existent and now exists, it is known to be eternal.

And:

All sentient beings have buddha nature, but since it is completely covered over by the afflictive emotions, they do not see it....

Also, the *Great Drum Sūtra* says:

Kāśyapa, these four are examples of causes and reasons for obscuration of the nature in sentient beings. What are these four? They are like eyes blurred and darkened by blue or yellow cataracts, the moon covered by clouds, digging a well [to find water], and a lamp in a vase.

Kāśyapa, these four [exemplify] causes and reasons for saying “**sugatagarbha** exists.” By these causes and reasons, the buddha nature **or dhātu** exists in all sentient beings and in all living beings. It will [eventually] appear, adorned by the limitless major and minor marks. **It will be known in meditative awareness. By attainment of seeing and realizing** this nature, sentient beings will attain nirvāṇa.

Regarding “eyes blurred and darkened,” when eyes are covered with blue and yellow cataracts, so that they become blurred and darkened, they can be cured; but they will be blind until a physician

[who knows how to cure them] is found. When [such] a physician is found, they will quickly see again.

What is like the eyes being formerly darkened by cataracts, is the buddha nature or dhātu being covered by tens of millions of afflictive emotions. As long as practitioners prefer the vehicles of Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, for that long, though they abide in the absolute self, they will not appear to abide in the absolute self. They will [mistakenly] grasp a [relative] self among phenomena as their actual self. When they prefer the blessed buddhas, at that time, the absolute self will become realizable. After that, they will be suitable people for accomplishing buddhahood. Those people's eyes previously being blurred and darkened by the disease of blue and yellow cataracts is said to be like the sight of those obscured by the afflictive emotions. Nevertheless, like their eyes themselves, tathāgatagarbha definitely exists.

Regarding "like the moon covered by clouds," when it is covered by thick clouds, the disk of the moon does not appear. So, the nature or dhātu does not appear, when it is covered in the sheath of afflictive emotions. After clouds are cleared away from the moon, the moon fully appears. So, when the nature is separated from the assembly of afflictive emotions, the nature or dhātu will [fully] appear in the awareness of meditation.

Regarding "digging a well [to find water]," when a man is digging a well, as long as the earth is dry, because of that sign, he thinks, "water is far from here." When mud occurs, he knows by that sign that water is near. When he encounters water, his digging is over. The way Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas please the tathāgatas is similar. By relying good practice, they dig away the afflictive emotions. Then, like [the man] finding water in the well, they find tathāgatagarbha.⁵²³

Regarding "a lamp inside a vase," the light of a lamp inside a vase, is not [seen as] bright and brilliant. It does not produce any light for sentient beings. So, though tathāgatagarbha is taught [in scripture] to possess limitless major and minor marks, it produces no benefits for sentient beings. When the vase is broken, the lamp naturally shines forth to benefit living beings. So, tathāgatagarbha abides in the vase that is the sheath of tens of millions of afflictive emotions, blazing intensely like a lamp. When the afflictive emotions of saṃsāra are exhausted, like the lamp when the vase is broken, tathāgatagarbha [shines forth to] benefit sentient beings.

According to these four reasons, just as the nature, or dhātu, of sentient beings exists in me, it should be known to exist within all sentient beings as well....

Also:

Some, wanting to view the [true] self, wondered, "If I look a little

further into my afflictive emotions and my beginning and end, will I find it?

The Blessed One replied, “You will not. However, after the afflictive emotions are purified, you will find the self **that is the nature of phenomena**.

There, and so forth, in very many profound sūtras, it is taught with many examples and reasons how their completely pure nature, sugatagarbha, eternally abides within all sentient beings; but it cannot be seen and attained, until it is separated from incidental defilements. Also, in the glorious *Kālacakra Tantra*:

From all the omnipresent absolute wisdom beings⁵²⁴ everywhere, comes the lucid, unborn, and unceasing [pristine wisdom] that produces supreme bliss. [Then] it is not covered **by consciousness**, and it is realized by pristine wisdom. In the three realms, this is **not** apprehended by anything other **than pristine wisdom**. It cannot be realized by the **ephemeral** senses of all ordinary beings.

Also:

Abiding in the three realms, **dharmakāya** performs benefits for sentient beings without **conceptual** thoughts [of doing so], like a wish-fulfilling gem. This wish-fulfilling gem that is dharmakaya abiding in their minds is not seen by sentient beings, by the power of fruition of non-virtue. That is not the fault of the wish-fulfilling gem. It happens because all beings must fully experience the fruition of their virtue and non-virtue. When peoples’ minds are purified, they become lords of victorious ones. What [more] could a victorious one who is other [than beings themselves] do?

Also:

Absolute dharmakāya that possesses all its aspects, is not seen **by consciousness**, because of defilements that are the power of the afflictive emotions and Māra.

The commentary says:

Though dharmakāya that possesses all its aspects, abides within all these child-like ones, these child-like ones never see it. Why? That is from the power of the afflictive emotions and Māra; that is, **it is due to illusions of consciousness that occur** when the life-wind moves in the left and right channels.

There, and so forth, this is extensively explained. Incidental defilements are unreal and imagined. Their mount or root is the [karmic] winds moving in the left and right channels, **the successive winds** of the afflictions and Māras. If these winds do not cease, incidental defilements will not cease [either]. If incidental defilements do not cease, it is certain that sugatagarbha cannot manifest or be attained. Since that is so, even bodhisattvas, who have only a small remainder of the winds, cannot fully

and completely manifest or attain sugatagarbha, let alone other beings. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* as translated by Devacandra teaches this extensively, using the example of a physician who, after treating the eyes of many blind people, shows them his finger up to two or three times. At first they cannot see it, but finally they do:

Similarly, child of noble family, bodhisattva great beings who have attained the tenth bodhisattva level and who have performed all the diagnoses and treatments of complete purification are also like that. Though they have performed those complete purifications, they are like those blind people, [after they were treated by a physician]. I teach them up to two and three times that tathāgatagarbha exists within them, but they cannot see it right away. When they finally see it, they say, “If I was completely encircled by the wheel of selflessness-only for this long, so that I could not see tathāgatagarbha; how could Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas see it? Child of noble family, thus it is difficult to find people who have entered into realizing the meaning of my treatises about the nature or dhātu.

And:

If even bodhisattva great beings who have attained the tenth bodhisattva level think, “We see only roughly that tathāgatagarbha exists in each of us,” how could Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas ever see it? For example, some people who were traveling on a road suffered a disturbance of the bile, so that they were confused about the directions. When they thoroughly examined the directions, they could see the road and forms roughly. Similarly, even bodhisattva great beings who have attained the tenth bodhisattva level, though they examine thoroughly, see only roughly that the unmade nature or dhātu, sugatagarbha, exists within their own bodies....

At the end of this extensive teaching it says:

Child of noble family, it is very difficult to see tathāgatagarbha, **and it is impossible to see it with** ordinary **consciousness**. Therefore, it is the object of tathāgatas, but not of Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. Child of noble family, that is how my teaching should be known by capable ones. It is not in accord with all worlds.

The Lord of Secret, Vajrapāṇi, says:

This self-arising pristine wisdom is the essence of the kāya of coemergence, dharmakāya, sambhogakāya, and nirmāṇakāya. It mixes pristine wisdom, body, speech, and mind into one. It truly abides **pervasively** within all phenomena of the three levels: the celestial realms, on the earth, and under the earth. However, it is difficult to find, for those of low merit.

This passage teaches that sugatagarbha, self-arising pristine wisdom with the nature of the four kāyas and four vajras, abides in all of us; but is difficult to find for those of low merit. Also, the *Śrīmāla-devī Sūtra* says:

Blessed One, tathāgatagarbha is not the self, the sentient being, the life, or the individual. Blessed One, tathāgatagarbha is not experienced by sentient beings who have fallen into the view of a destructible collection **as the selfhood of me and mine**. [It is not experienced] by those who, have degenerated, due to erroneous realization, from [primordial] experience of tathāgatagarbha as **pure, blissful, permanent selfhood**. It is not experienced by those whose minds have strayed into [fixating] conceptual emptiness, **so that non-conceptual pristine wisdom does not arise**.

Blessed One, tathāgatagarbha is the essence that is the dhātu of the holy Dharma. It is the essence that is dharmakaya. It is the naturally world-transcending essence of phenomena. It is the **naturally**, completely pure essence of phenomena.

Blessed One, tathāgatagarbha that is naturally, completely pure and that is not completely afflicted by the complete afflictions is the object of the tathāgatas. I think of it as inconceivable.

According to what is extensively taught here, and so forth, tathāgatagarbha exists; but it is not seen by sentient beings, because it is obscured by their faults.⁵²⁵

(11). **How Asserting that Sugatagarbha does not Abide Like That is Refuted by the Absurd Consequence that the Absolute Would Not Exist**

If sugatagarbha did not exist, the absolute would not exist either, since these two are synonyms. That [non-existence] cannot be [consistently] maintained, because, as the *Jewel Cloud Sūtra* says:

Child of noble family, whether **relative** tathāgatas arise or not, the absolute **ground of emptiness, the inseparable space of the dhātu and awareness, abides eternally** without destruction.

Child of noble family, therefore bodhisattvas shave their hair and facial hair. They put on saffron robes, and they leave their homes to become homeless. Taking ordination, they exert themselves and persist in doing so, as if their hair or clothing were on fire, to attain this very Dharma, **the inseparable space of the dhātu and awareness**.

Child of noble family, if this absolute did not exist, pure conduct would be useless. The arising of tathāgatas would be useless. Since the absolute does exist **as the inseparable space of the dhātu and awareness**, bodhisattvas can be said to be skilled with regard to the absolute. They are **unlike ordinary beings, who can only be skilled with regard to the relative**.

Similarly, the *Aṅgulimāla Sūtra* says:

Moreover Mañjuśrī, realizing that cow's milk has butter in it, human beings **who want butter** churn it. Why do they not churn water? Because **butter** is not present in water. Likewise, Mañjuśrī, because tathāgatagarbha exists **as the inseparable space of the dhātu and awareness**, human beings keep discipline, and engage in pure conduct [in order to attain it].

Moreover Mañjuśrī, persons thinking that they want gold dig in rock that contains gold. Why do they not dig in wood? They dig in rock, because the rock contains gold. They do not dig in wood, because wood does not contain gold.

Likewise, Mañjuśrī, persons who think that the absolute exists keep discipline. They engage in pure conduct thinking, "[If I do this,] I will become a buddha." However, Mañjuśrī, if the dhātu did not exist, dharmakaya would not exist; and in that case, the form kayas emanated from it would not exist either. Pure conduct would be useless. Even if [skim] milk is churned for ten million years, no butter comes forth from it. So, if the **absolute** self that is the dhātu did not exist, keeping discipline and engaging in pure conduct would be useless for those who desire **and are trying to attain** that **absolute** self.

As the noble one Nāgārjuna says **about the presence and absence of the element gold in rock**:

If that element exists, by engaging in action,
[As a result of that,] pure gold will be perceived.
If that element is absent, even engaging in action,
Only afflictions of suffering will be produced.

Also, the victorious Maitreya says in the *Sublime Continuum*:

If the buddha nature⁵²⁶ did not exist,
Suffering would never make us sad.
We would have no desire to gain nirvāṇa,
Nor effort and aspiration toward that goal.

That nirvāṇa and cyclic existence and are seen to have
Respective faults of suffering and blissful virtue
Is due to the presence of the enlightened family.⁵²⁷
Without that family, seeing them⁵²⁸ would not exist.

Also, the *Śrīmāla-devī Sūtra* says:

Blessed One, if tathāgatagarbha did not exist, suffering would not make us sad. There would be no desire for nirvana, no aspiration for it, and no attempt to attain it.

There, and so forth, it is said that, if absolute tathāgatagarbha is maintained to be non-existent, there are many faults. If tathāgatagarbha is understood to be existent, there are many virtues. You should look at and listen extensively to the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, the *Great Drum Sūtra*, the *Aṅgulimāla Sūtra*, and other such excellent, extremely profound sūtras of the final turning, as well as the profound tantras. If you do, you should definitely believe in sugatagarbha.

d. **Instructions to Abandon the Faults and Bad Consequences of Lacking Faith in Sugatagarbha**

(1). **Instructions to abandon many faults and bad consequences**

If such things are not done, the Buddha teaches that innumerable many great faults and bad consequences will occur, as here in the *Aṅgulimāla Sūtra*:

Beings who, when they were formerly born as cattle, quarreled with their own mothers, and **went wrong**, becoming completely deranged; even now, when they are sleeping, grind their teeth with the sound *trig trig*. They do not believe in tathāgatagarbha, the **profound** phenomenon of **ultimate** suchness. In future time also, these beings who grind their teeth with the sound *trig trig* and do not believe in tathāgatagarbha will not be otherwise. Venerable Purna, they will be **born again as** cattle who do not know the nature of phenomena.

Beings who, when they were formerly born as pigeons, were very attached to form and came under the power of sexual lust, mostly do not believe in tathāgatagarbha [at the present time]. They perform **bad**, violent activities. In the future as well, these beings will come under the power of sexual lust. They will mostly not believe in tathāgatagarbha. These beings will not be otherwise. Becoming pigeons, these beings, who have been accustomed to the afflictive emotions for a long time, **will be born again** like that.

Beings who were formerly shameless ravens, ungrateful for what was done for them, eating filth, now too are poor and shameless. They do not believe in tathāgatagarbha. In the future too, when they hear about tathāgatagarbha, in the presence of those who are beneficially teaching sentient beings, they will laugh scornfully and leave, **like Indian extremist teachers**. These beings who do not believe in the dhātu that is the true self will not be otherwise. Venerable Purna, **they will be born again** as shameless ravens eating filth.

Beings who were formerly ugly monkeys, with minds like a variety of waves clashing on the ocean, even now are disturbed in their minds when they hear about tathāgatagarbha. They do not believe in tathāgatagarbha. In the future also, those beings who were disturbed in their minds when they heard about tathāgatagarbha

and who did not believe in it will not be otherwise. Venerable Purna, they will be **born again as** monkeys, with **wild** minds and **vulgar** thoughts.

Beings who were formerly born as owls, hardly seeing at all by day, but seeing [well] at night, and who did not believe in tathāgataḡarbha; now too, when they see a guru in the world **who teaches sugataḡarbha**, neither desire nor maintain that view. In the future too, venerable Purna, when they hear about tathāgataḡarbha, in the presence of those who are beneficially teaching sentient beings; these beings who did **not** believe the teachings of the Buddha will be **born again** as owls who do not believe the teachings of the Buddha, any more than they would **the nonsensical, false words of** a charlatan fortune teller.

Venerable Purna, beings who formerly were born as solitary swamp things,⁵²⁹ sullied by [reading] worthless texts so that they did not believe in tathāgataḡarbha, even now do not know that selflessness is a word **with** an [unspoken] intention. Because of that, these beings who were solitary swamp things are **terrified by the dhātu that is the true self, and so they** do not believe in tathāgataḡarbha. In the future too, **because they are** attached to entirely worthless texts, these isolated swamp things who do not know about indirect teachings and do not believe in tathāgataḡarbha will not be otherwise. Venerable Purna, these beings will certainly be **born again as** isolated swamp things who do not believe in tathāgataḡarbha.

Beings who formerly were low thieves who lurked in [any] doorway and were called “dog-like,” in the future also will be beings who wander [uninvited] into others’ homes and do not believe in tathāgataḡarbha. They will not be otherwise. Venerable Purna, these beings will be **born again as** low beings like dogs.

Beings who formerly were cats, always attached to eating meat and not believing in tathāgataḡarbha, now too are attached to meat. They have become flesh-eating demons who cut off life in the form of cats. In the future too, as terrifying flesh-eating demons in the form of cats, they will cut off others’ lives. They will be born again as flesh-eating demons, in the form of cats.

Beings who were hermaphroditic mice that turned away from tathāgataḡarbha, now too are hermaphroditic mice who drink beer and eat extreme filth. In the future too, those beings who drink beer will be low beings like hermaphrodites who do not desire tathāgataḡarbha. [These beings who are] satisfied with the taste of worldly **desirable qualities**, they will not be otherwise. They will be **born again as** beings who look like hermaphroditic mice, drink beer, and eat extreme filth.

Beings who were shameless and deceitful jackals that turned away

from tathāgatagarbha, even now do not know that tathāgatagarbha is explained through hidden teachings. Tathāgatagarbha is seemingly taught with the intention of selflessness, but [the hidden] intention is the existent [absolute] ground of emptiness of [relative] selflessness. Not knowing that, they become beings like deceitful jackals. In the future, too, they will not know that tathāgatagarbha is explained through hidden teachings. Wrongly conceptualizing, the dhātu of selfhood [as selfless, they will say] “It is like this.” They will certainly be born again as jackals.

Beings who formerly were ugly scorpions that turned their backs on tathāgatagarbha, even now, when they hear of tathāgatagarbha, blaze fiercely with fiery afflictions. With hearts of rage, they are definitely like scorpions. In the future too, when these beings hear about tathāgatagarbha, they will say, “The Buddha never said that!” and they will not believe what is said. They will not be otherwise. Venerable Purna, they will certainly be born again as beings who perform heated actions like scorpions.

Beings who formerly were terrifying, venomous serpents that said unspeakably [bad] things about sugatagarbha, even now are very arrogant, and they are still born in the form of terrifying, venomous serpents. In the future too, they will say unspeakable things about people who beneficially teach tathāgatagarbha. These beings who act like serpents will not be otherwise. Venerable Purna, they will certainly be born again as terrifying, venomous serpents.

Beings who, when they were formerly stupid and small-minded, sheep, did not know good qualities [when they saw them,] and did not act powerfully in trying to comprehend tathāgatagarbha, disparaged the sūtras of the final turning saying, “these are texts of Mind-only.”⁵³⁰ Even now, these beings disparage the sūtras of the final turning saying, “these are texts of Mind-only.” In the future too, these beings will certainly be quite somnolent. They will deprecate tathāgatagarbha when they hear about it. They will not be otherwise. They will certainly be born again as weak beings of small capacity.

Beings who formerly were small-minded, dried-up water buffaloes that turned their back on tathāgatagarbha; even now, are like weak and dried up water buffaloes. Made avaricious by the three views of the three poisons, they are feebly angry and small-minded. These beings who formerly turned their back on tathāgatagarbha will not be otherwise. They will certainly be born again as water buffaloes that are dried up with avarice by the three views of the three poisons.

Beings who formerly were bears that turned away from tathāgatagarbha and did not believe in it, growl with displeasure, even today. They have certainly been born again as beings like bears and jackals. In the future too, these beings will turn away from

tathāgatagarbha, and they will continue to growl with displeasure. They will not be otherwise. Venerable Purna, these beings will be **born again as** beings like bears and jackals.

Beings who formerly, when they were kalandaka birds, turned their backs on tathāgatagarbha, **as the ground of selflessness** in the relative, and did not believe in it; even now, are beings with dull eyes who have certainly become kalandaka birds. In the future too, these beings will conceal knowledge of Tathāgatagarbha, and they will perform shameful, evil deeds. They will not be otherwise. Not teaching tathāgatagarbha, they will certainly be **born again as** weak-eyed kalandaka birds.

Beings who were formerly [impoverished] donkeys that gave rise to an attitude of not needing tathāgatagarbha, even now are poor and eat rough food like donkeys. In the future too, they will be poor people born in bad castes and commanded by others. They will have no faith in tathāgatagarbha being the ground that is the true self. They will **believe in** and meditate on **mere** selflessness. They will not be otherwise. Venerable Purna, they will **be born again as** beings of lust that are servants, chickens, and donkeys.

Beings who were formerly jealous gods who slandered tathāgatagarbha, having short bodies and long fangs like ugly tortoises; even now, have short bodies like tortoises. They are certainly jealous gods. In the future too, they will be beings with short bodies and long fangs like [ugly] tortoises who slander tathāgatagarbha. They will not be otherwise. Venerable Purna, they will be born again as beings of the jealous god family.

Beings who formerly were hungry ghosts with flames coming from their mouths, as they disparaged and scoffed at tathāgatagarbha; even now have dry lips and palates. They are still emaciated, hungry ghosts with flames coming out of their mouths. In the future too, venerable Purna, these beings with extremely emaciated bodies, who disparaged and scoffed at tathāgatagarbha, will not be otherwise. They will certainly be born again as feeble hungry ghosts with flames coming out of their mouths.

Also, the *Great Cloud Sūtra* says:

Mahāmeghagarbha, those with minds that are completely stupefied and thoroughly deluded, so that they wrongly say, “the Tathāgata is impermanent, not ever-enduring, not stable, and subsiding,” are overcome by bile. Harmed by the dark torpor of their views, they completely burn themselves with poisonous torments. When they fall asleep at home, they sleep badly, dreaming in madness, burning themselves by viewing terrifying dreams. [These include] all frightened Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, as well as other beings who are like old, arthritic cattle. They burn away the oil of knowledge of the permanent nature of suchness, the essence of

awareness, with the greatness of its buddha qualities.

These beings abandon the supreme phenomenon that is like a lamp illuminating the dhātu of the permanent nature of the Tathāgata's qualities. They disparage the Śākya lineage.⁵³¹ With many views ignorant of the way things are, they wipe away knowledge of suchness, the way things are, as if with [cleansing] eye medicine made of kataka⁵³² fruit. They cut out and cast aside the tongues of those who took ordination to follow the Tathāgata.⁵³³ They abandon the pure and true pristine wisdom of the great enlightened family, the family of those who possess the nature of tathāgatagarbha, in which renunciation and realization and the two accumulations are primordially, naturally complete. In that way, they attribute faults to sugatagarbha.

To realize the Tathāgata's secret speech through prajñā, take ordination so that you can follow the Tathāgata and become the Buddha's child. For all views, stabilize the miraculous display of realization by well-distinguishing how the two truths apply to appearance and emptiness, existence and non-existence, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, the two and four truths, being separable and inseparable, having and not having contradiction, and so forth.

Also, the *Sūtra Benefitting Aṅgulimāla* says:

Previously, beings who viewed the permanent kāya of the Tathāgata as impermanent were sickened with leprosy. Even now these beings are weak and sickened with leprosy. They are certainly continuing to disparage the kāya of the Tathāgata by saying. "It is impermanent." In the future, too, those beings will view the permanent kāya of the Tathāgata as impermanent. Again sickened with leprosy, they will not be otherwise. Venerable Purna, they will continue to disparage the permanent kāya of the Tathāgata as impermanent.

Also:

The many beings who declined from a former time of health and prosperity so that they had many diseases are those who viewed the ever-continuous kāya of the Tathāgata as not being ever-continuous. Now too, those beings decline from former health and prosperity and view the ever-continuous kāya of the Tathāgata as not being ever-continuous. In the future too, those beings will continue to deteriorate from their former time of health and prosperity. They will continue to view the ever-continuous kāya of the Tathāgata as not being ever-continuous. Venerable Purna, they will certainly not be otherwise. They will disparage the luminous kāya of the Tathāgata as not being luminous.

Beings who formerly viewed the everlasting body of the Tathāgata as not being everlasting, taking birth in the womb of an excellent consort of a king, will die and be impermanent. Even now those

beings take birth in the womb of an excellent consort of a king and die, and they disparage the everlasting, naturally luminous kāya of the Tathāgata. In the future too, as impermanent beings with short lives, they will continue to disparage that everlasting kāya.

Also, the *Great Drum Sūtra* says:

When they teach, they discourse contemptuously on tathāgatagarbha, **saying that it is merely of the provisional meaning.** They abandon discourses saying that the Buddha is permanent. Because of doing that, they cannot pass beyond suffering to enlightenment.

From the meaning of such extensive teachings as these, it follows that the Buddha's nature, suchness, transcends the instantaneous. It also follows that, since the nature of things is established as eternal, sugatagarbha too is established as eternal. A newly arisen Buddha that did not exist before is not suitable to be sugatagarbha. As the noble Lord of the World, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka says:

Pristine wisdom, free from one instant or many, is taught as suchness by the victorious ones.

He is teaching that the [eternal] pristine wisdom of suchness transcends the instantaneous. Moreover, the victorious lord Maitreya says in the *Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras*:

Because it is natural⁵³⁴ and because it is unbroken,
By that continuity, it is said to be permanent.

That is saying that the nature of phenomena, the kāya of the essence, is permanent by nature. Also, the *Supreme Continuum* says, "Uncompounded and self-existing...." The intention is that, since ultimate Buddhahood is uncompounded, it is free from the instantaneous.

Some say that all teachings that dharmakaya and pristine wisdom are permanent have the intention that they are a permanent succession [of phenomena], but that the instantaneous phenomena that make up that succession are impermanent. Some also say that all teachings that the Buddha or pristine wisdom is uncompounded have the intention that they are uncompounded [only in the limited sense of not being caused] by karma and the afflictive emotions. Those who say such things simply do not understand these points of [the Buddha's] great intention. Either they have not seen these profound scriptures, **or they have not worked through the sources of the secret teachings of the sūtras and tantras, [like those taught here.]** Similarly, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, as translated by Devacandra, says:

Through meditating on the selfhood of tathāgatagarbha as non-existent, and always meditating **everything as empty of its own essence**, sufferings will not end. [The meditator's experience] will

[fall into intense torments of the afflictive emotions] like a moth flying into a lamp. On the other hand, beings who meditate on tathāgatagarbha as existing will be able to stop afflictive emotions, even while they exist. How? By the condition of [experiencing] tathāgatagarbha.

And:

A monk with perfect discipline who says of uncompounded tathāgatagarbha, “Tathāgatagarbha is compounded,” becomes a heretic. Dying would be better. Since a tathāgata is uncompounded, those who say “A tathāgata is compounded,” are liars. Those who say “A tathāgata is compounded,” go to the Uninterrupted Hell, as casually as if they were going into their own homes. Venerable Mañjuśrī, do not view the Tathāgata as being compounded, like compounded, **impermanent** things.

From now on, while [you are] wandering in saṃsāra, turn back from unknowing. Realize only the [meditative] knowledge that thinks, “The Tathāgata is uncompounded.” **When** you have done that, by the fruition of that meditation, you cannot fail to possess quickly the thirty-two major marks like those of the Tathāgata....

Also, the *Sūtra Taught by Vimalakīrti* says:

Novice bodhisattvas wound themselves by two causes, so that they do not truly contemplate the profound Dharma. What are these two?

1.-When they hear profound sūtras that they have not heard before, becoming afraid and doubtful, they do not rejoice in them. Additionally, though these sūtras are taught, they think, “This sort of thing was not taught before. Where did it come from?” Then they abandon these sūtras.

2.-Also, child of noble family, they do not attend, accompany, serve, and respect those who grasp the profound sūtras, those who are vessels of the profound Dharma, and those who teach the profound Dharma. From time to time, they also say unpleasant things about them....

They do not believe in or have devotion for suchness, the perfection of prajñā, natural nirvāṇa, the pure self, the suchness of self, buddha nature, the naturally-existing kayas, and so forth, nor for sugatagarbha that is synonymous with these. When they criticize them, and so forth, it is taught that great faults arise. As the Lord of the World, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka says [in the *Stainless Light*]:

The sixth root downfall is to disparage the doctrine. The doctrine is the chapters on suchness in the styles of the perfection of prajñā and mantra, **which have a single ultimate meaning**. Disparaging them is the sixth root downfall.

And:

If people hold that there are faults in their own or others' doctrine, that is the sixth root downfall. Therefore, know the relationship of what comes earlier and later **in one** tantra **or another**, **where one meaning, [suchness,] is taught by many names**; know the virtues of **realizing the one taste of multiplicity** and the faults of **not knowing that**.

Otherwise, [by following] toxic masters outside of realization of tathāgatagarbha, masters who are attached to enjoying sense-objects, speaking lies, and grasping faults that are not visible [externally], they will go to the Uninterrupted Hell.

There, and so forth, it is taught that the single ultimate meaning of mantra and the perfection of prajñā is suchness. If those who do not know that sugatagarbha and the perfection of prajñā are synonymous grasp them as different and quarrel, disparaging [the perfection of prajñā;] that is a root downfall for those who have entered mantra. If [mantrikas] grasp what is faultless as faulty, because they do not see that these teachings' many synonyms have one meaning, it is taught that they will go to the Uninterrupted Hell. *The Extensive Mother, the Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra in One Hundred Thousand Stanzas* says:

“Venerable Śāradvatiputra, what fault is there if this profound perfection of prajñā is explained before bodhisattva great beings who have newly entered this vehicle?”

Śāradvatiputra said, “Kauśika, if this profound perfection of prajñā, **the essence in which ground and fruition are inseparable**, is taught before bodhisattva great beings who have newly entered this vehicle; when they hear this profound perfection of prajñā, they will be frightened. They will be anxious. They will be terrified. They will turn back. They will abandon it. They will not have devotion for it.

Kauśika, because these bodhisattva great beings who have newly entered this vehicle will abandon this perfection of prajñā after hearing it, they will create and accumulate karmic formations of falling into error. When they have produced and accumulated these karmic formations, they will be in a situation where it will be difficult for them to become completely and perfectly purified and to blossom with true, complete enlightenment.

There, and so forth that is very extensively explained, as it is in the *Middle Length and Abridged Mothers. The Compendium of Precious Qualities* says:

Even if those of little intelligence have served billions⁵³⁵ of buddhas during their former practice, if they do not have faith in the victorious ones' perfection of prajñā, **the essence in which ground and fruition are inseparable**, they will abandon it. When they abandon it, they will go without refuge to the Uninterrupted Hell. Those who want to encounter the supreme pristine wisdom of

buddhahood must have faith in this *Mother of the Victorious Ones*.

All these faults that are taught of fearing, abandoning, not believing in the perfection of prajñā, having no devotion for it, and so forth, are also faults of being afraid of, not believing in, and having no devotion for mere words like “sugatagarbha,” “the pure self,” and so forth. That is because these are equivalent. Similarly, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, as translated by Devacandra, says:

For example, the taste of this sūtra is like the taste of delicious cow’s milk. Those who abandon the teaching of tathāgatagarbha in this sūtra are like [stupid] oxen. For example, as ungrateful beings who kill themselves produce supreme sorrow, know that beings who abandon tathāgatagarbha and teach mere selflessness produce supreme sorrow....

There it is taught that the extensively taught faults of abandoning and not believing in sugatagarbha, the pure self, and so forth, are also faults of abandoning, and so forth, the profound perfection of prajñā. That is because their meanings are the same. Similarly, the *Sublime Continuum* says:

All condemnation of noble ones by beings attacked by afflictions,⁵³⁶
And contempt for the Dharmas they teach is produced by
attachment to views.⁵³⁷
Defiled attachment to views should never be joined to the mind.
Clean cloth is transformed by dye, but that covered in oil is not.⁵³⁸

These ten most important causes by which Dharma of the
conquerors⁵³⁹
is abandoned are through inferior mind, lack of the white,⁵⁴⁰
erroneous pride,⁵⁴¹
obscuration by Dharma poverty,⁵⁴² taking provisional for true,
craving possession,⁵⁴³
the power of views,⁵⁴⁴ disparaging Dharma,⁵⁴⁵ avoiding its holders,
and insufficient devotion,

Much more than fire, dread poisonous snakes, assassins, and
lightning,

The capable fear transgression of profound [holy] Dharma
Fire, snakes, and vajra lightning only part us from this life,
But we will not go to the ultimate terror, the Avīci Hell.⁵⁴⁶

Even those influenced again and again by bad companions to harbor
malice for buddhas,

For fathers, mothers, and arhats, who should not be killed,⁵⁴⁷ or
those who create dissent in the supreme assembly,⁵⁴⁸

If they truly contemplate dharmatā,⁵⁴⁹ will quickly be liberated from
those deeds;

But how can those whose minds have malice for Dharma⁵⁵⁰ be freed
from that?

Also, the *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

Beings for whom it is not their place,⁵⁵¹ afraid, will suffer
torment.⁵⁵²
By long accumulation of a great heap of demerit,⁵⁵³
Through lack of the family,⁵⁵⁴ bad companions, not gathering virtue,
and not training mind.⁵⁵⁵
By becoming afraid of this Dharma,⁵⁵⁶ they will fall from this great
reality.⁵⁵⁷

Also, **four merely apparent reasonings are given as reasons why such a Great Vehicle teaching should be feared:**

1. I do not know that teaching's, nor the Buddha's profundity.
2. Why is this alleged profundity not an object of logic?
3. Why should those who know this profundity be liberated?
4. By those doubts, why isn't this teaching a suitable object of fear?

Also, **in answer:**⁵⁵⁸

Other than that, and not;⁵⁵⁹ very deep and going to **all**;⁵⁶⁰
Variously taught,⁵⁶¹ and always taught by many,
Not as these words explain,⁵⁶² is the Buddha's profound
intention.⁵⁶³
When the wise rightly examine,⁵⁶⁴ they will not fear this Dharma.⁵⁶⁵
If the meaning of words is literally conceived,⁵⁶⁶
We get lazy,⁵⁶⁷ and understanding degenerates.
As we are crushed by abandoning what was very well taught,⁵⁶⁸
Our great anger⁵⁶⁹ [quite] obscures the holy Dharma.

These explanations are like the view of a soaring vulture from on high. There is no problem if they are a little different from what was said looking from the ground. Also, Asaṅga's *Abhidharma of the Middle Way, the Abhidarmasamuccaya*, says:

Why do some beings have no devotion to what is profound and vast and fear these supremely vast teachings? It is because they are separated from **the perfection of prajñā that realizes** the nature of phenomena **as it is**; they have not produced roots of virtue; and they are under the power of bad companions.

Also:

Why do some beings, though they have devotion for the very extensive sūtras and their meaning, fail to renounce saṃsāra and attain certainty of liberation from it? It is because they dwell in holding their own [conceptual] view as supreme and they are **attached to** the literal meaning of its words.⁵⁷⁰

With the intention of commenting on these errors, the Blessed One says in his *Enumeration of Teachings in the Great Mirror of Dharma*:

For bodhisattvas who improperly discriminate the Dharma

according to the literal words, twenty-eight bad views arise. What are these twenty-eight bad views?

1) Views attached to verbal characteristics, like “everything is non-existent”; 2) views deprecating the imputed, **conceptual labeling of the imagined** for any reason; 3) views deprecating the conceptualized dependent; 4) views deprecating suchness, the completely established nature of phenomena, **by, for example, by merely apparent reasoning that it is merely provisional [and views] that claim to establish that nothing exists [in any sense]**; 5) the view that [conceptually] apprehended, [relative] things are real, [because relative reality is the only kind there is]; 6) altered views, **like holding that scriptures teaching the ground of emptiness actually accord with the nihilistic view**; 7) views holding that faults do not exist, **like holding that, because everything is empty of itself, so are evil deeds**; 8) the view “proving” release **from former obscurations, by the same reasoning**; 9) presumptuous views **that turn away from the true view and become contemptuous of it**; 10) quarrelsome views, **[arising] from lack of devotion for the true view**; 11) erroneous views, **thinking that what does not accord with the true view does accord with it**; 12) views of increase, **[mistakenly] thinking that merit increases by setting forth some bad view**; 13) views of non-assertion, holding that conceptual assertions are never valid; 14) views of base deception **that cheat and belittle others with false and deprecating words**; 15) views seeking worship **as a buddha, if one practices**; 16) views stabilizing willful ignoring, **though true cognition would reverse them, not reversing them anyway**; 17) root views **that accept the topics of bad views**; 18) views viewing **previously taught views of [existent] characteristics as non-views**; 19) views that invalidate practice **by disparaging the three natures**; 20) views that there is no true release, **like 5 and 6**; 21) views of obstructions, and so forth, **like 7 and 8**; 22) views that increase non-merit, **like 9. and 10**; 23) views of the non-existence of effects, **like 11 and 12**; 24) views that cut off everything by annihilation, **like 13 and 14**; 25) deprecatory views, **like 15**; 26) views that are not fully presented, **like 16**; 27) views that are great in number, **like 17, because bad views are very extensive in number**; and 28) arrogant egotistic views, **including all of the previous 27.**

In this sūtra, **seventeen actual views are listed. The rest are ways of classifying those.** According to what is taught there, we may grasp some teaching literally, without knowing the intended meaning, and that a single profound meaning was taught by the Buddha by many synonyms. If we abandon sugatagarbha, the pure self-nature, and so forth by doing that, we actually abandon the Dharma. To stop the great karmic waves of doing that, when we consult profound sūtras of the final turning like the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* and the oral instruction of the profound tantras explained in the bodhisattva commentaries, the following two intentions must be realized as non-contradictory and to have the same meaning:

- (1) the intention of sugatagarbha, the pure self, being taught as emptiness, selflessness, and so forth.
- (2) the intention of the ground of the empty and selfless being taught as sugatagarbha, the nature of phenomena, and so forth.

(2). **Instructions to be Attentive to the Means of Doing That**

Regarding this, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

Child of noble family, it is like this, for example. When there is a drought, palasha, kanika, and aśoka trees do not grow flowers and fruit. Moreover, when there is no **moisture**, all growing **[trees] that need** water will not grow to their full measure, and all medicin[al herbs] will have little power.

Child of noble family, this sūtra of the Great Vehicle, the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra, is also like that. After I pass into nirvāṇa, sentient beings will not have respect for it. Its brilliance will diminish. Why? Because these sentient beings will not know that the Tathāgata taught **[sūtras] teaching the emptiness and selflessness** with the intention **that** their ground was absolute **sugatagarbha, and that he taught absolute sugatagarbha with the intention that it was the ground of emptiness and selflessness**. Why so? Because sentient beings then will have little merit.

Child of noble family, moreover, when the holy Dharma of the Tathāgata is soon to be destroyed and vanish; in that period, at that time, many monks will engage in evil deeds. They will not know that the Tathāgata taught [emptiness] with the intention **that the ground of the emptiness and selflessness of all phenomena was sugatagarbha**. Therefore, they will be lazy and idle. They will think that, since everything is empty, there is nothing to renounce, avoid, or attain. They will not be able to read, recite, and teach with discrimination the pure and true Dharma of the Tathāgata. Like foolish thieves who cast aside real jewels and carry off husks and chaff, not knowing that this sūtra was **clearly** taught with the intention of sugatagarbha, **the ground of the emptiness and selflessness of all phenomena**, they will be lazy in regard to it. They will generate no effort [to understand it].

Alas, in future time, they will fall off a very terrifying great cliff. Alas, these beings will not exert themselves with regard to this Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra of the Great Vehicle. Only bodhisattva great beings will enter into the meaning of this sūtra, **that clearly teaches sugatagarbha, by realizing it** as it truly is. Without attachment to the [literal] words and letters, devote yourself to that profound [experienced] meaning. Do not say anything that contradicts the [Buddha's] intention. Do not teach such things to sentient beings....

Also:

Within the twelve **limbs of the sūtras, [here] meaning [the Buddha's]**

teachings [in general], there are the sūtras. Within the sūtras, there are the very extensive class. Within the very extensive class, there are the Perfection of Prajñā Sūtras. Within the Perfection of Prajñā Sūtras, there is the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra, arising like the essence of butter from milk. “The essence of butter” is a metaphor for buddha nature. Buddha nature, in which ground and fruition are inseparable, is the Tathāgata.

And:

Child of Noble family, previously, [in a former life,] you asked the tathāgata Dīpaṃkara whether this sūtra exists. Child of noble family, this *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* is [about] the essence, sugatagarbha. Its intention is the ground of the emptiness and selflessness of all phenomena [that is presented in] the teachings that all the tathāgatas have taught. Why? The tathāgatas have eleven⁵⁷¹ other classes of sūtra, but in those they did not clearly explain buddha nature and the eternity, bliss, selfhood, and complete purity of the Tathāgata. The blessed buddhas never pass into [final] nirvāṇa; that is, they are not impermanent. Thus, this sūtra that clearly teaches an everlasting Buddha is the essence of the Tathāgata’s ultimate intention. ...

So, it is clearly taught. And:

Child of noble family, this Mahāparinirvāṇa Mahāyāna Sūtra should be known to be an immeasurable, incalculable, inconceivable assembly of merit. Why? Because it clearly explains the essence of the Tathāgata. Therefore, if sons or daughters of noble family desire to know quickly the essence of the Tathāgata, they should apply diligent effort to this sūtra.

Also, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, as translated by Devacandra, says:

For example, when the dragon’s roar thunders in the sky,⁵⁷² mushrooms quickly grow. In the dry hot season, not even the name “mushroom” occurs. Just as mushrooms arise only due to dragon thunder; though the pure self, the Tathāgata essence, exists, it is obscured by phenomena of the afflictive emotions, so that there appears to be selflessness. However, those who hear this great sūtra, as soon as they hear this Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra, give rise to knowledge of tathāgatagarbha, as mushrooms arise [from rain].

All sūtras and all meditative absorptions that do not clearly reveal the absolute ground of emptiness of other, sugatagarbha are like the dry hot season. By learning about these sūtras and all meditative absorptions, it is not correctly known that sugatagarbha exists.

Like mushrooms growing in the rainy season, all the secret words of the Buddha’s intention arise from hearing this Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra. As soon as all sentient beings hear this sūtra, as mushrooms arise [from rain, they] correctly know that tathāgatagarbha exists.

Also:

Child of noble family, moreover for example, all rivers are contained within the ocean. Child of noble family. Similarly, all sūtras, all meditative absorptions, and all of the Great Vehicle are contained within this Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra. Why? Because it clearly teaches the completely ultimate way things are, sugatagarbha.

In these words, and so forth, this was extensively taught by the Buddha. Therefore, sugatagarbha, the pure [true] self-nature, buddha nature or the natural Buddha, should not be disparaged and deprecated. It is synonymous with suchness, the great Mother [Prajñāpāramitā], svābhavikakāya, mahāmudrā, great Vajradhara, Vajrasattva, and so forth.

e. **Instructions on Receiving the Beneficial Qualities of Faith**

(1). **Abundant Beneficial Qualities are to be Attained**

We should have faith, devotion, and belief [in tathāgatagarbha]; because if we do, immeasurably great beneficial qualities will arise. The *Āṅgulimāla Sūtra* says:

By the cause of knowing that eternal tathāgatagarbha exists within all sentient beings, whatever supreme aspects of bliss and abundant excellence there may be in the world are all attained. By hearing about eternal tathāgatagarbha, there is abundant excellence in the three times, past, present, and future. There is birth in the celestial realms, or on earth all happiness is always attained.

And:

Good, good! Tathāgatagarbha is taught. With the excellent expression that is spoken, tathāgatagarbha is heard. The Great Vehicle sūtras are read with a pleasant sound like that of the sage mi 'byin. Performing offering service to the volumes **that teach absolute sugatagarbha, [accompanied]** by large and small drums and cymbals of kinnaras and gandharvas, beings who always focus continually on making such offering service **in this life** will subsequently become buddhas. So says the Tathāgata.

Also:

Also, Mañjuśrī, likewise, my teachings will abide in the southern regions for many years. Bodhisattvas like you, who do what is very difficult, even giving up their lives to benefit all sentient beings, will teach saying, "Tathāgatagarbha is eternal," "Tathāgatagarbha continually endures," and "Tathāgatagarbha is everlasting."

And:

Mañjuśrī, when the holy Dharma has remained for eighty years, those like you will carry the great burden of the holy Dharma.⁵⁷³ Thinking, "I will carry the holy Dharma on my shoulders," they will

teach sentient beings in Jambuling and all its sub-continent, [saying] “Tathāgatagarbha is permanent, everlasting, peaceful, continual, and enduring.” They will give up even their own lives [to do so]. Whether sentient beings believe them or not, whether **their bodies** are killed or cut to pieces, their [true] body has been a permanent kāya from the beginning. Bodhisattvas performing the supremely difficult task of carrying the burden of Dharma will arise in the southern regions.

And:

The Blessed One spoke saying, “Aṅgulimāla, the Tathāgata too performed what is very difficult. In future time, when the holy Dharma has remained for eighty years, at that time, sūtras of the Great Vehicle that teach tathāgatagarbha will be taught to benefit all sentient beings. What is very difficult to do will be done. Sentient beings holding that viewpoint will teach it, doing what is very difficult.”

And:

In the southern regions, the Great Vehicle will be taught. It will diligently be taught as the essence. The activities of tathāgatagarbha will be practiced free from the eight great things.⁵⁷⁴ It will be taught that the Tathāgata is permanent, everlasting, and peaceful, and that tathāgatagarbha stably endures. My Śrāvaka monks and nuns and my Śrāvaka male and female lay disciples, will diligently say that tathāgatagarbha is the essence.⁵⁷⁵ They will take up my teaching as their burden....

Also:

By the merit of hearing about tathāgatagarbha, all sentient beings will rejoice, enjoying long life without sickness and without harm or oppression **by others**. By hearing that the fundamental nature, tathāgatagarbha, is permanent, continually enduring, and everlasting, and that nirvāṇa is deathless; temporally they will all be prosperous, enduring for a long time. [Ultimately, they will] be eternal.

And:

Those wishing to teach the Dharma should teach like this. They should praise the Tathāgata as the permanent, real, and pure **fundamental nature**. Those rejecting tathāgatagarbha, who do not teach like that, are not worthy of a lion throne, as outcastes are not worthy of a royal Nepali elephant....

It is extensively taught there, and also the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

Therefore, Mañjuśrī, children of noble family who have a sense of conscience and decency do not view **the fundamental nature** of the blessed buddhas as being in accord with compounded things.

Mañjuśrī, extremists with bad views say, “the fundamental nature of the blessed buddhas is in accord with compounded things.”

Buddhist monks who keep discipline do not view the fundamental nature of the blessed buddhas as being in accord with compounded things in that way. Saying, “the fundamental nature of the blessed buddhas is in accord with compounded things.” is false speaking. It should be known that individuals who say this, as soon as they die, will be born as hell beings. They will live in hell like individuals living in their own homes.

Mañjuśrī, tathāgatagarbha, the fundamental nature, really is uncompounded – so do not say it is compounded. Mañjuśrī, from now on, while revolving in saṃsāra, abandon not knowing the way of the fundamental nature. Seek pure and true pristine wisdom of that nature. If the Tathāgata is viewed in that manner, you will quickly be enlightened with unsurpassable, true, complete enlightenment. You will possess the thirty-two major marks.

Then the youthful Mañjuśrī said to Cundāla, “Good. Good. Child of noble family, you have manifested a cause of very long life. Your realization that the fundamental nature, the Tathāgata, is an uncompounded phenomenon with the attributes of permanence, and absence of transition and change is good. Your not saying that the fundamental nature, the Tathāgata, is a compounded phenomenon is good.

Individuals burned by fire cover their bodies with clothing, due to a sense of conscience and decency. By those attitudes, they are born in the realm of the thirty-three kinds of gods. Becoming kings as Bhramā and universal monarchs, they are always born in happy realms. They are never born in the lower realms. By not saying that the fundamental nature, the Tathāgata, has the characteristic of being compounded; you too, in future time, will doubtlessly attain the thirty-two major marks, the eighty minor marks, the eighteen unshared qualities of a buddha, immeasurable life, not abiding in saṃsāra, and supreme bliss. Before long, you will attain true, complete enlightenment.

And:

An individual who believes that the fundamental nature, the Tathāgata, has the attribute of permanence is extremely rare, like the udumvāra flower. It should be known that, after I pass into nirvāṇa, whoever generates an attitude of faith on hearing this very profound sūtra of the Great Vehicle; in future time, will not fall into the lower realms for a hundred thousand eons.

And:

Proclaiming the lion’s roar [that fearlessly proclaims the definitive teachings] is not explaining that all phenomena are impermanent, painful, selfless, and completely impure. It is explaining that the

fundamental nature, the Tathāgata, is only eternal, blissful, and completely pure.

Also, the *Sūtra of the Densely Adorned Realm* should be consulted, where it says:

“Those who hold and teach this Dharma, and those who see them, touch them, or make offerings to them, those who see their tombs, remains, or volumes, and those who eat their flesh⁵⁷⁶ will be liberated from the hell of immediate retribution and the lower realms. They will become irreversible and attain enlightenment.”

Other qualities, immeasurably many, are also taught there. Also, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, as cited by Bhāvaviveka in his commentary on *Madhyamaka*, the *Lamp of Prajñā* says:

Sentient beings who teach, “All sentient beings possess tathāgatagarbha,” possess immeasurable good qualities. Children of noble family desiring this Dharma who have formerly done countless evil deeds will be purified by no more than a headache, catching a cold, [minor] pain, or being criticized.

By master Bhāvaviveka citing that approvingly, he too is clearly saying that sugatagarbha is the definitive meaning. Also, the *Sūtra Teaching the Inconceivable Qualities and Pristine Wisdom of the Tathāgata* says:

Though some bodhisattva practices the first five perfections for eight billion eons, Mañjuśrī; another bodhisattva who thinks, “The Tathāgata, the fundamental nature, is permanent,” and produces devotion to that, generates immeasurably more merit than the first....⁵⁷⁷

Also, the *Sūtra of the Miraculous Meditative Absorption Ascertaining Utter Peace*, says:

If someone speaks the words, “The Tathāgata is permanent,” identifying him as forever stable; the merit of that is taught to be more excellent than the merit of offering to immeasurable members of the Saṅgha everything they need, for ten million eons.

Also, the *Great Cloud Sūtra* says:

The bodhisattva great being Mahāmegākāśa asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, what sūtra[’s view is such that], if it is possessed by bodhisattvas, there will be an ocean of meditative absorption? ...

The Buddha replies:

They [who have this view] will see the Tathāgata, the fundamental nature, as permanent. Clearly seeing that the Tathāgata is permanent and everlasting, they will become kings who praise me. Saying that I am everlasting, they will say, “The Tathāgata is an everlasting kaya.” There will be a perfect view with complete delight in the Tathāgata’s peaceful

nature. Saying, “The Tathāgata is eternal, everlasting, stable, and peaceful,” they will come to have a view of all the oceans of all his aspects.

And:

For sentient beings who praise impermanence, emptiness, nirvāṇa [as cessation] that completely passes beyond pain, and selflessness; there is the completed teaching of reality. [This is the teaching of] the greatness of the buddha qualities of nirvāṇa, abiding within the eternal, everlasting, stable, and peaceful nature that is ultimate selfhood.

For sentient beings who explain how the Dharma [of scripture] will subside, there is the reality, for those with completely purified eyes, that the holy Dharma of realization of the fundamental nature is [forever] stable.

And:

You request from the Tathāgata, the arhat, the truly, completely enlightened one, teachings in words appropriate to you, proliferation of subtle and profound words about the greatness of a certain quality of the Tathāgata. [That quality is] the characteristic of permanence, the fundamental nature of all sentient beings.

[You request] a treasure of teachings of holy Dharma, a treasure of the king of Sūtras, a treasure of teachings of holy Dharma⁵⁷⁸ that is unequalled by [teachings of ordinary beings] like yourself, a treasure of the inexhaustible amṛita of sentient beings.

Your request to the Tathāgata is good. Presenting the stable treasure that is the fundamental nature of all sentient beings, I should explain it to you.

And:

The blessed buddhas are not fabricated.⁵⁷⁹
The Tathāgatas are [eternally] unborn,⁵⁸⁰
With a body or kāya that is hard like diamond.
I will also teach the body of emanation.

Even a relic the size of a mustard seed
Does not arise and come forth by itself.
When there is no flesh and blood and bone,
How can relics of holy beings arise?
In order to benefit all sentient beings,
Relics have been left by skillful means.

The dharmakaya of the blessed Buddha,⁵⁸¹
The dharmadhātu of the Tathāgata,⁵⁸²
The kāya of the Blessed One is like that.
Teaching the holy Dharma is like that.

The *Holy Golden Light* and other texts say:

The **absolute** Buddha does not pass into nirvāṇa.⁵⁸³

The [absolute] holy Dharma⁵⁸⁴ does not subside.

Also, the *Sublime Continuum* says:

The Buddha **dhātu** and Buddha's enlightenment,
The Buddha **qualities**, and Buddha activity ⁵⁸⁵
Are beyond apprehension by even purified beings.⁵⁸⁶
These are experienced only by the leaders.⁵⁸⁷

Yet intelligent ones, with devotion to the Conquerors' realm,
Becoming a vessel of the host of Buddha qualities,
By delighting in these inconceivable qualities,
Outshine the merit attained by every sentient being.

More than a person who offers golden lands set with jewels,
As many as atoms, each day, to the Dharma victorious ones;
Another who hears just the words,⁵⁸⁸ and hearing, gives rise to
devotion
Has much greater merit than rises from such giving.

More than intelligent ones who keep immaculate discipline,
Without any effort ⁵⁸⁹ for eons, in body, speech, and mind;
Others who hear just the words, and hearing, give rise to devotion,
Have much greater merit than rises from such discipline.

More than those who meditate, quelling the fiery afflictions,
Perfecting all the absorptions of the god and the Bhramā realms;
Others who hear just the words, and, hearing, give rise to devotion
Have much greater merit than rises from such meditation.

Prajñā abandons afflictions and dualistic knowables,⁵⁹⁰
Thus, **prajñā** is supreme, and the cause of this [knowledge] is
hearing.⁵⁹¹

The former tathāgata Always Emitting Light, sitting on a single seat,
taught this Dharma of tathāgatagarbha for five hundred great eons, with
many hundreds of thousands of examples. His teaching was understood
with little difficulty in all the ten directions, in world realms as many as
the atoms of ten buddha fields. It is taught that all who at least heard the
term "tathāgatagarbha," gradually, after their virtuous roots had ripened,
attained enlightenment – except for the four bodhisattvas
Mahāsthāmaprāpta, Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, and Vajramati.⁵⁹² The
meaning of this is clearly and extensively taught in the *Tathāgatagarbha*
Sūtra:

Earlier, when I was engaged in practice,
From the sugata named Lion Banner,
I heard the name of this sūtra; and on hearing,
Devotion was produced, and I joined my palms.

Through the karma of doing that good action,
I quickly attained to true enlightenment.
Thus, bodhisattvas who are competent
Should always hold this sūtra that is supreme.

There, and so forth, the Buddha teaches magnificent, beneficial qualities like faith and devotion for sugatagarbha. He also speaks quite extensively on the great realization:

When I had left from there and went outside,
Some among the people said to me,
“In sentient beings, capable of omniscience,
Exists the essence of He who Went to Bliss.⁵⁹³”

If completely pure devotion can be created,
That is a substitute for the Buddha’s kindness.”

(2). **Instructions to be Diligent in the Means to That**

If buddhahood can be attained by merely hearing the name of sugatagarbha like that, why mention what happens when someone meditates on it, practicing with faithful devotion? Therefore, compassionate capable ones should teach sugatagarbha, even putting aside their lives. Those who strive for liberation should seek it, listen to it, and so forth, – even if they are engulfed in a great pit of fire. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

Then the bodhisattva Kāśyapa said these words to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, as the Tathāgata has taught, this Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra is supreme and excellent like butter, the essence of milk. Whoever drinks it is cleansed of the aspects of sickness, and it also goes into all medicines. Hearing that teaching, I thought, “Those that do not wish [to attain] and to listen to this sūtra **that clearly teaches ultimate sugatagarbha** are most extremely perverse. They cannot have good and wholesome minds.”

Blessed One, I could flay my skin, making it into a surface for writing. I could draw out my blood, using it [as pigment] for ink. I could draw out my marrow, using it for fluid. I could split my bones, using them for pens. I could bear to do all that to write down this Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra. Having written it down, I could still bear to read it, chant it, comprehend it, and teach extensively to explain it to others.

Blessed One, if sentient beings wish for enjoyment, I will first give them enjoyment; but then, I will urge them to read this Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra. If people have great enjoyment, I will first make pleasant conversation about what they desire; but then, I will urge them to read this Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra. If people are low and mean-spirited, I will diligently force them to read it. If people are proud, I will first serve them as they wish, making them very pleased and joyful. Then I will teach them this Mahāparinirvāṇa

Sūtra.

If people disparage the very extensive sūtras, I will tame them by force. After that, I will make them read this Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra. If people have faith and devotion for the sūtras of the Great Vehicle, I will go before them with great respect. I will praise them with honor, deference, and service.

Then the Blessed one spoke, saying to the bodhisattva Kāśyapa, “It is good. It is good.” and so forth. Then finally, the Buddha says:

“Before long, to a numerous circle of retinue, you will teach and explain this Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra, teaching the **sugata** essence that is the intention of my teachings, **the ground of the emptiness and selflessness of all phenomena**.

And:

Child of noble family, moreover, it is like this. If a sentient being does not know that the Tathāgata is permanent, that individual should be known to be blind. If a sentient being knows that the Tathāgata is permanent, I say that such an individual, in spite of having **bubble-like** eyes of flesh, has the divine eye **that sees without obstruction from a distance** in space and time.

Also, the *Āṅgulimāla Sūtra* says:

If someone does not hide tathāgatagarbha and very diligently teaches that teaching to benefit sentient beings, that person will attain the divine eye. Such a person will have the divine eye in the world.

Also:

Those who teach tathāgatagarbha, whether or not they have the afflictive emotions, are called “perfect buddhas” **who see without obstruction from a distance**.

And:

Those who teach tathāgatagarbha are called “perfect buddhas.”

Moreover, the *Great Drum Sūtra* says:

Other than that, regarding sentient beings who are highly interested in the vast,⁵⁹⁴ beings who assert the nature of the Tathāgata’s greatness that is permanent, stable, peaceful, and everlasting; the Tathāgata embraces them in great pristine wisdom possessing the supreme of all aspects. That is the crown that empowers them with the Great Vehicle.

Also:

Those who teach, “a permanent buddha, tathāgatagarbha, exists,” and moreover proclaim that without abandoning it, **remaining stably**

in their excellent view— which is not a view of the mere emptiness of destructible collections, but a view of the uncompounded everlasting, supreme ground of emptiness of all compounded phenomena— and who also desire to attain that, and whose minds are stable in these qualities; the rest of their good qualities are inconceivable.

And:

In the future I will have many students who apprehend the holy Dharma. Of the hundreds of students taught previously in this sūtra, Bhadrāpāla, Guhyagupta, and so forth, the one I am speaking about is the last. Who is he, Kāśyapa? He is the Licchavi youth called “Delightful to See for all the World.” In the future, he will beat the great drum of Dharma. He will sound the conch of Dharma.⁵⁹⁵

And:

Then the Blessed One also spoke, saying these words to Kāśyapa. Kāśyapa, you cannot be like a protector of this region.⁵⁹⁶ While protecting this buddha field, this youthful one who is skilled in means will listen to all of this sūtra. Having listened, he will hold it in his body. He will manifestly bring it forth in the world.

Establishing him on the seventh bodhisattva level, I will bless him as an ordinary being.⁵⁹⁷ Then, when lives are about eighty years and the teachings have deteriorated, he will be born on the banks of a river in the southern region of Maruṇḍa, in a city called “Great Garland,” near a city called Ayodhyā, in a family lineage called Kayāgauri. He will be a monk holding my name.⁵⁹⁸ Capable in means like a regional protector, among those indolent with regard to my religious training, after he takes ordination, he will gather them with the [four] different kinds of gathering.⁵⁹⁹

Having found this sūtra, he will hold it to his body. Having purified the Saṅgha, he will cause them to completely abandon what is unsuitable. He will proclaim the great Dharma. He will sound the conch of Dharma taught in this Great Drum Sūtra. He will raise the Dharma victory banner. Second, he will expound the Great Vehicle sūtras that discourse on emptiness. Third, he will expound discourse on the eternal nature or dhātu of sentient beings and the Great Drum Sūtra. He will beat the great drum of the great Dharma. He will sound the great conch of the great Dharma. He will plant the banner of the great Dharma. He will manifestly wear my armor.

And:

Where there are sentient beings to be tamed, among those sentient beings it will be said, “Look at this blessed Sage of the Śākyas, who has come here.” Look at this Tathāgata who is so eternal, stable, peaceful, and everlasting.” I will indicate, “Know the stable and blissful [reality] I have explained like this.”

Then, [arriving] from the ten directions, the blessed buddhas will show their individual faces in space to that one and say, “That one is like [those teachings].” All the world will say, “Well taught,” and believe it.

And:

In the style of expressing praise of the **absolute** three jewels, the secret of the buddhas is like this: “The Tathāgata is permanent, stable, peaceful, and everlasting.” The secret of the buddhas is so proclaimed.

Also, the *Great Cloud Sūtra* says:

Where there is even the name of a sūtra explaining the greatness of the good qualities of the Tathāgata, who is profound, equal, permanent, everlasting, and stable, the Tathāgata in whom the Dharma of the absolute ground of emptiness that is empty of other correctly abides; **even if you must go** into the midst of a fiery crossroads [to hear it], you should go there.

Mahāmeghagarbha, for such a meaning to be listened to, and for such an object to be venerated, painted, worshipped, and honored, **even if you must enter** into world realms filled with fire, as many as the grains of sand of the river Ganges, you should go there....

There the Buddha elegantly explains this teaching at length. [Focus] on this inmost knowledge **that is other than [knowledge of] the outer and inner of the relative**. This is knowledge of **changeless** buddha nature, great nirvāṇa, suchness, the self that is the pure self, naturally luminous sugatagarbha, the perfection of prajñā, the source of phenomena, lady Mahāmudrā, the A syllable, absolute truth, EVAM, Vajrasattva, the sexually neutral level, the partless, all-pervading [essence] that possesses all the supreme aspects, the vajra sun and moon, the sixteen kinds of suchness, the twelve true meanings, the changeless, perfectly established, the great maṇḍala of vajradhātu, the essence of the realms of mantra, dharmadhātu, the all-pervading, having all aspects, but without aspects, [the reality] transcending all worldly examples, the great wish-fulfilling gem, the great, vast, supreme wish-fulfilling tree.

Hear, contemplate, and meditate on that with faith, devotion, and great diligence day and night. These are names of the absolute ground of buddhahood that abides eternally from the beginning, the naturally existing enlightened family that is the ground of purification of all defilements.

From planting and cultivating [relative] seeds of liberation that depend on [the absolute enlightened family], the developing enlightened family receives special roots of virtue. This is completely well-known by the capable. However, fearing it would take too many words, I will not write

more about that here. You should consult Asaṅga's *Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras* and *The Bodhisattva Levels*, where it is extensively discussed.

f. **Abandoning Various Wrong Conceptions Arising About That**

(1). **The Absurd Consequence That All Beings Would Have Complete Renunciation and Realization**

Objection: If absolute buddhahood existed intrinsically in all sentient beings, would they not have ultimate renunciation and realization intrinsically?

Answer: Here a distinction needs to be made. There are two kinds of abandonment: 1) [eternal, absolute] abandonment where all defilements never existed in the nature from the start, and 2) [relative, causal] abandonment that exhausts incidental defilements that are overcome by antidotes.

The first is primordially complete within the nature of phenomena. *As the Questions of King Dhāraṇīśvara Sūtra teaches regarding primordial exhaustion of defilements in the ground:*

Exhaustion here is not exhaustion by antidotes.

Exhaustion is taught as previous exhaustion.⁶⁰⁰

Also, the *Sublime Continuum* says, *regarding [knowledge of] the nature of phenomena* by discriminating self-awareness pristine wisdom:

Because is it completely pure by nature,

And afflictions are exhausted from the start...

The *Praise of Dharmadhātu* says:

Afflictive emotions never existed *in dharmadhātu*,⁶⁰¹

Free from defilements in the beginning, middle, and end.

And the *Immaculate Light* says:

The bhaga, which is the all-pervading source of dharmas,

The wisdom being, was always free from obscurations.

There, and so forth, this is proclaimed, because: 1) the meaning of *everything* is [eternally] complete [in the absolute]; 2) the absolute, *whose characteristics are taught in the tantras using many synonyms*, naturally transcends all phenomena of [dualistic] consciousness; 3) [the absolute] is certainly, *naturally* liberated from all obscurations; 4) *all* the afflictive emotions and sub-afflictions that constitute the all-pervading afflictive emotions, together with their habitual propensities, are *naturally* abandoned forever [in the absolute]; and 5) [the absolute,] naturally free from dust, has no dust of defilements at all. Having *naturally* abandoned faults, it is flawless.

[The first kind of abandonment,] natural abandonment [of defilements] in [primordial] buddhahood that is the absolute nature of phenomena, is complete from the beginning. That is true because 1) that nature of phenomena, *as taught in the Vajra Tent*, is the primordially liberated Tathāgata; 2) [that nature of phenomena,] as taught in the *Complete Purification of All Lower Realms Tantra*, is [eternal] buddhahood that is prior to all the *form kayas*; and 3) that nature of space, *as taught in the Vajraśekara Tantra*, is completely liberated mind that abides from the beginning.

Therefore, [defilements that] exist in the nature of phenomena are *naturally, primordially* abandoned [as nonexistent]; but that [nature itself] exists, because that nature of phenomena is naturally completely pure.

The second, [deliberate] kind of abandonment does not exist in sentient beings who are unfamiliar with the path. That is *the fault of those beings*, rather than the fault of the doctrine, because 1) we do not proclaim that all beings are actual buddhas or that they have attained buddhahood; 2) while we proclaim that the absolute [essence of] buddhahood exists in all sentient beings, we do not proclaim that conventional [manifestation of] buddhahood exists in them.

Similarly, realization of buddhahood is also of two kinds: 1) realization of self-arisen pristine wisdom, dharmatā's primordial insight of itself; and 2) realization of pristine wisdom arising from other, [causally] produced by familiarity with the profound path.

The first is naturally complete within the absolute nature of phenomena. That is because 1) the absolute manifests as all self-knowledge and other-knowledge; 2) it is the all-knowing, all-insightful Holy One; 3) [the absolute] is motionless, discriminating self-awareness; 4) [the absolute] is the pervasive self of the *self-arising* five wisdoms; 5) [the absolute] holds the way of non-dual pristine wisdom; 6) [the absolute] has the nature of the ten completely pure awarenesses. *These are the self-arising five pristine wisdoms, multiplied by two for prajñā and skillful means*; and 7) [the absolute] holds those completely ten completely pure knowledges.

Thus, within the absolute nature of phenomena, renunciation [of defilements] and realization of the fundamental natural state are [primordially and naturally] complete. *As the Sublime Continuum says:*

Though *dharmadhātu*⁶⁰² is pure of the incidental *relative*
 That has the characteristic of being separable,
 It is not empty of the unsurpassable qualities⁶⁰³
 That have the characteristic of being inseparable.

And:

There is nothing here that is to be cleared away,
 And there is nothing at all that is to be established.

Those verses have the same meaning as the above.

The first kind of realization is inseparably complete in the nature of phenomena. As the nature of phenomena exists primordially, **natural realization** also exists primordially.

The second kind of **incidental** realization, is not complete in sentient beings who have not progressed on the path. Those **beings** have not yet caused realization of selflessness to manifest. However, that is not the fault of the doctrine, **which does not proclaim that sentient beings are actual buddhas, and so forth**, for the reasons given earlier.

(2). **Abandoning the Absurd Consequence That All Sentient Beings Have [Already] Gathered the Two Accumulations**

Objection: If, as you say, buddhahood intrinsically abides in sentient beings, would not all sentient beings have [already] gathered the two accumulations and abandoned the two obscurations?

Answer: These conclusions do not follow, for the reasons given above, **that we do not proclaim sentient beings to be actualized buddhas, and so forth**. Moreover, you should know that gathering the two accumulations has divisions according to the two truths, [absolute and relative.]

Absolute gathering of the two accumulations is naturally, primordially complete in absolute truth. This is the case because 1) absolute truth has merit **naturally from the beginning, and so** it is the absolute accumulation of merit; and 2) **[absolute truth] is** pristine wisdom **that is naturally present from the beginning**. That is the great source of [incidentally attained] pristine wisdom. [Self-aware wisdom] knows whether it possesses pristine wisdom or not.

[In brief,] the absolute has gathered the two accumulations **naturally from the beginning**.

Moreover, the two accumulations are complete in the absolute because 1) the absolute is the **primordial, naturally present** buddha great Vairocana; 2) the absolute is the **primordial, naturally present** great sage.⁶⁰⁴ This lord of sages is the universal lord with the ten powers. He is the supreme first buddha, **the primordial and natural** holder of the three kayas, with the nature of the buddhas' five kayas; and 3) the **primordially, naturally** perfect buddha is the eternal guide of the world.

That sentient beings who have not entered the path have not gathered the relative two accumulations is not a fault of our doctrine, **as we do not proclaim that beings are actualized buddhas, and so forth**.

Abandoning the two obscurations also has two modes, [relative and absolute]. This was explained previously, in the discussion of abandoning.

Some people object that if buddhahood existed within sentient beings, karma, afflictions, and suffering would be non-existent in them, and they would be omniscient [buddhas]. The extreme multitude of such mistaken criticisms are nonsensical. Those who make them do not know the difference between having a quality by nature, and manifesting that quality.⁶⁰⁵ Having a quality by nature, does not entail manifesting that quality. If it did, since shit exists in people [by nature], wouldn't people be shit?

The renunciation and realization realized in relative truth, and the two accumulations gathered there, are relative truths of the path. The renunciation and realization realized in absolute truth, and the two accumulations gathered there, are aspects of the [primordial, absolute] truth of cessation.⁶⁰⁶

These two are complete within the relative form kayas and absolute dharmakaya respectively. The first, [relative kind] is completely well known. Regarding the second kind *that is primordially and naturally complete, Expressing the Multitude of the Absolute Names of Mañjuśrī*, says:

Conqueror, enemy conqueror, total⁶⁰⁷ conqueror,
Lord of Dharma, Dharma conqueror,
Self of all buddhas, supreme reality,
Abider abiding in non-abiding nirvāṇa,⁶⁰⁸

Holder of the thirty-two major marks,
Ocean of omniscient pristine wisdom,
Holder of all the kāyas of pristine wisdom,
Tathāgata with a body of pristine wisdom,

Treasure holder of omniscient wisdom,
Holder of the nature of all the buddhas,
Unsurpassable buddhas' enlightenment,
Perfect buddha who has risen from A,

Perfect buddha in the vajra posture,⁶⁰⁹
Only teacher, guru of all beings,
Who is the great essence of all the buddhas,
As well as the great mind of all the buddhas...

The intention of that extensive teaching is that buddhahood is absolute truth, the profound natural state of how things are. That [natural state] abides within sentient beings as defiled suchness, the ground of purification. That [natural state] *abides in actualized buddhahood as undefiled suchness, the fruition of purification. However, the ground and fruition of purification have a single essence.* Extensive scripture and reasoning will be presented to explain its many synonyms.

(3). **Abandoning Wrong Conceptions That Confuse the Ground of Purification with the Purified**

Objection: If **the absolute is said** to be the ground of purification in that way, doesn't that contradict the well-known explanation that the ground of purification is the skandhas, constituents, and sense-sources?

Answer: True, saying this contradicts an explanation well-known by some,⁶¹⁰ but it does not contradict scripture. The *Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra* says:

Just as persons who have a desire for honey
Seeing that it exists in a nest of bees,
Entirely guarded and hidden by the bees,
Will then completely drive away those bees;

Likewise, here, like the nest of [stinging] bees,
Are all the beings of this three-fold world.
These beings have ten million afflictive emotions.
Seeing a tathāgata in those afflictions
I, to purify that **absolute** buddha,
Remove the afflictions, like driving away the bees.

Here, in "to purify that **absolute** buddha," "buddha" means sugatagarbha, the first, [primordial, absolute] buddha, abiding before all the [relative] buddhas.

"To purify" that refers to that buddha as the ground of purification, and not to the defilements of which that buddha is purified.

The self-perpetuating skandhas, and so forth, are not the buddha who is the ground of purification. [On the contrary,] they are the defilements to be purified from that buddha. The same sūtra says:

Children of noble family, absolute sugatagarbha is the nature of phenomena.⁶¹¹ Whether tathāgatas arise or not, sentient beings always have tathāgatagarbha.

Thus, children of noble family, [sugatagarbha] is covered by the sheath of the afflictive emotions, which are worthy of being disparaged. To destroy the sheath of the afflictions and to completely purify the inner Tathāgata's pristine wisdom; the Tathāgata, the arhat, the truly, completely enlightened buddha teaches the Dharma to bodhisattvas. You too should devote yourselves to this activity.

Here, "completely purify the [inner] Tathāgata's pristine wisdom," refers to self-arising pristine wisdom, sugatagarbha, also called "the primordially liberated tathāgata."

"Purify" here refers to the ground that is purified, not the phenomena purified from that ground. The defiled skandhas, and so forth, are incidental defilements, not the pristine wisdom of a tathāgata. Also, the same sūtra says:

Children of noble family, moreover, it is like this, for example.

Śalistamba rice, millet, barley, and other grains are completely protected by husks. Until their husks are entirely removed, they cannot be eaten, made into drink, or tasted. Children of noble family, men or women who wish to perform activities associated with food and drink, like eating and drinking, reap and thresh these grains to remove the chaff of their outer husks.

Likewise, children of noble family, the Tathāgata, with the absolute tathāgata eye, sees the tathāgata, the self-arising buddha, within all sentient beings, enclosed in husks of afflictive emotions.

Children of noble family, the Tathāgata clears away those enclosing husks of afflictive emotions. Then those sentient beings are free from all those enclosing husks of afflictive emotions. The Tathāgata teaches them the Dharma, thinking that, [by practicing it,] they too will be among the number of Tathāgatas, arhats, truly, completely enlightened buddhas in the world.

Then, at that time, the Tathāgata spoke these verses:

Whether it is śalistamba rice,
Millet, barley, or other kinds of grain;
For as long as these still have their husks,
They cannot be used for any functions.

When these are threshed, and the husks are cleared away,
They can be used for many different functions;
But grains whose essence, the kernels, still have husks
Cannot be used for these functions by sentient beings.

So, seeing that the level of buddhahood in all beings
Is covered by the husks of afflictive emotions;
I completely purify these by teaching Dharma,
So that they may quickly be victorious.

Dharmatā like mine within all beings,
Is wrapped in hundreds of afflictive emotions.
With all ways of purifying that whatever,⁶¹²
That they may quickly be victors, I teach the Dharma.

These words teach that the ground of purification is the absolute, self-arising level of buddhahood that has gone to bliss. That [level of buddhahood] abides within all beings. The skandhas and afflictive emotions are not **that ground of purification**. “When the sheathing husks of afflictive emotions are purified,” refers successively to 1. the defilements to be purified [from the essence] and 2. the essence that is the ground of purification from them. The *Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra* says further:

As a person’s lump of solid gold
Might fall into a place of dirt and filth,
And though it stays there more than a few years,
It has the attribute of non-destruction;

When it is seen by a god, with the eye of the gods,
That god says to others, so that they may clean it;
“Here there is supremely precious gold.
Clean it off and then make use of it.”

So, I see that all sentient beings have long
Been constantly oppressed by afflictive emotions.
Knowing these incidental afflictions **are curable**,
To cleanse their nature, I skillfully teach the Dharma.

“Nature” here refers to the kāya that is the [changeless] nature [of things].
Nāgārjuna’s *Root Verses on the Middle Way* says:

Natures are unfabricated things.
They do not depend on other things.
Natures changing into something else
Is something that is never suitable.

That is a description of sugatagarbha.⁶¹³ “Cleansing” the nature refers to purifying the ground of purification, not the defilements purified from it, because the nature is by nature luminous [purity]. When the skandhas, incidentally defile it, the nature is [seemingly] not luminous; but these defilements that arise from causes and conditions are not an intrinsic aspect of the nature, as **the same text** says:

A nature arising from causes and conditions
Would be a nature that is by nature produced.

Also, Dignāga’s *Commentary on Valid Cognition* says:

The nature of the mind is luminosity,
However, its defilements are incidental, ...

The reasons are extensively explained there. Furthermore, the *Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra* says:

Children of noble family, moreover it is like this. For example. Forms of horses, elephants, women, or men made of wax are put in clay and covered with it. **The wax** is melted, and it flows out of the clay. Then gold is melted, and the molten gold [is poured in to] fill **the remaining cavity**. After it gradually cools, all these forms are **of the same shape as** the black, ugly clay **mold outside them**, but the inner forms are golden. Then the metal-smith, or his apprentice, seeing that the forms are cool, breaks the outer clay with a hammer. Then the golden forms inside [the clay] are **seen** completely correctly.

Children of noble family, similarly the Tathāgata sees with the tathāgata eye that all sentient beings are like clay forms with a buddha-child [hidden] inside the outer sheath of afflictive emotions and sub-afflictions. [That child is] a beautiful tathāgata consisting of immaculate, precious pristine wisdom, replete with [all] the **absolute buddha qualities, the powers, and so forth, transcending in number the grains of sand in the river Ganges.**

Children of noble family, the Tathāgata, seeing that all sentient beings are like that, goes among the bodhisattvas, fully and correctly teaching the teachings described here. So that bodhisattva great beings may become peaceful and cool, and so that their precious tathāgata pristine wisdom may be completely purified; the Tathāgata breaks all their external [covering of] afflictive emotions with the vajra hammer of holy Dharma.

This passage teaches that the Tathāgata's precious wisdom is the ground of purification, and the incidental skandhas are not. These teachings that the ground of purification is Tathāgatagarbha, the Buddha, and the level of buddhahood were taught to clear away assertions by some that tathāgatagarbha is not [the same as] buddhahood.

Likewise, through many other examples and manifold other means, [the Buddha teaches that] the Dharma is taught to purify and clear away incidental defilements that cover sugatagarbha. All such teachings say that the ground of purification is sugatagarbha, and that the faults of incidental defilements that are purified from it are not. Therefore, this sūtra should be studied extensively. Likewise, the *Sublime Continuum* says:

There tathāgatagarbha is taught as the cause to be purified, while the defilements of the cause to be purified are not. Thus, it is established that defilements of the ground are not suitable to be called the cause or ground [itself].⁶²⁰

Moreover, it is taught that when suchness has incidental defilements, it is called "the ground of purification." When suchness is pure of incidental defilements, it is called "the fruition of purification." The nine examples of the essence teach the ground of purification. The nine examples of its defilements exemplify the defilements of which the ground is purified. These defilements are the self-perpetuating skandhas, constituents, and sense sources.

The exalted *Sūtra of the Chapter Teaching Limitless Gates of Purification* says that the ground of purification to be cleansed [of defilements] is self-arising pristine wisdom or omniscient pristine wisdom. Both are synonymous with sugatagarbha:

That gate⁶²¹ is the supreme Dharma that completely purifies omniscient pristine wisdom. By means of this **supreme Dharma**, bodhisattvas completely purify self-arising pristine wisdom. When they attain self-arising pristine wisdom, they turn the wheel of Dharma. Then they gradually purify limitless sentient beings by means of the Dharma. To completely purify the gate to nirvāṇa, they take up the gate that is the pristine wisdom of omniscience.

Moreover, sugatagarbha, with its many synonyms, is suchness. Suchness is the ground of all phenomena. Therefore, it is the both the ground in which defilements abide and the ground after it is purified of them.

Objection: The *Hevajra Tantra* says:

The five-fold skandhas, and the six sense powers,
The six sense sources, and the five great elements⁶²²
Are by nature completely pure. The obscurations
Of afflictions and knowables are what is purified.

Doesn't that passage say that the skandhas, constituents, and so forth, are what is to be purified?

Answer: The intention there is that the naturally purified [natures of the] skandhas, constituents, and so forth, [is purified.] Those natures are synonymous with absolute sugatagarbha.

"The obscurations of afflictions and knowables are what is purified," teaches that the impure skandhas, constituents, and so forth, **do not go beyond the** faults of the **two obscurations**. These are the defilements to be purified [from sugatagarbha]. For example, it is said, "Purifying anger, and so forth," and "Through this, the skandhas are purified." [Here purify has the sense of removal.] Also:

Likewise, even conceptualizations of real things
Are purified by true ascertainment [of what they are].

For the multitude of such assertions, through knowing the way of division of the two truths, you should understand the difference between 1) the **absolute** ground of purification, **inseparable awareness and the space of the dhātu**, and 2) the **incidental relative** defilements purified from that ground.

You should also understand that **this is the kind of difference that negates one** of a pair and asserts the other, **excluding that the two are different aspects of the same essence**. Moreover, The the glorious *First Buddha* says:

Mind that has defilements of passion, and so forth,
Is the cause of all the changes of saṃsāra.
Through separation from these, there is total purity,⁶²³
Of the nature⁶²⁴ that is pure of all defilements.

The intention of the many sūtra passages teaching that the skandhas, constituents, and so forth, are the ground of purification should be understood **to be the absolute skandhas, constituents, and so forth**. These naturally pure phenomena are [aspects of] the ground of purification. Impure phenomena [of the skandhas, constituents, and so forth,] are the defilements to be purified from it.

Objection: Then wouldn't even the Tathāgata's suchness be a ground of purification, with defilements that needed to be purified?

Answer: Exactly. The same suchness that abides as the fruition of purification in buddhas abides as the ground of purification in sentient beings. The suchness of buddhas and beings is not different at all. That

naturally pure suchness is associated with defilements in an individual being, but it is still pure [in nature. Thus, suchness] is both the ground and fruition of purification. There is no contradiction between these two. We have to be capable in dealing with that profound main point.

g. **Praise and Homage Summarizing the Meaning of These Points**

I offer homage to the inseparable state of suchness,
 Profound as the way things are, the dhātu of wisdom, the all ground.
 Abiding in some as the ground of defilements to be cleansed,
 And abiding in some as the ground that is free from all defilements.

That was the section on the ground abiding as eternal buddhahood.

Path

2. **The Teaching of the Profound Path by Which That Eternal Buddhahood May Be Obtained**

a. **General Presentation of the Path of the Great Vehicle**

(1). **Teaching the Reason Why the Path to Complete Purity is Necessary**

In that way, the inseparable dharmakāya of buddhahood, whose qualities are inseparable from its nature, intrinsically abides within all sentient beings. That does not mean that the two accumulations [of merit and pristine wisdom that constitute] the path are unnecessary. That is because 1) [to attain enlightenment,] incidental defilements must be cleared away, and 2) to perform benefits for all sentient beings, the relative form kāyas, [sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya,] must be developed.

To have a completely auspicious, authentic path, there must be perfect and complete view, meditation, and action. Moreover, these three must exist well in two forms, ordinary and extraordinary.⁶²⁵

(2). **Teaching the Completely Pure and Correct View Realizing Self-Emptiness**

To realize the widely-famed correct ordinary view, it is necessary to resolve that, in the way things really abide, all relative phenomena are nothing at all, like the horns of a rabbit or the son of a barren woman. [Relative phenomena] are not established as anything at all, **not even as mere appearance**. Therefore, they are non-existent like a flower in the sky. The sources for this view in the Buddha's middle turning, like Nāgārjuna's *Collection of Reasoning*, are utterly well-known; and so I will not write about them here. Doing so would make the present work too long.⁶²⁶

(3). **Teaching Completely Pure and Correct Meditation without Concepts and Free from Proliferation**

How to rest in the equanimity of meditation⁶²⁷ within the above state should be known from the instructions of the holy guru. There are also very extensive scriptural sources, like the following in the *Mother of the Conquerors*:

Śāriputra, the genuine yoga of bodhisattva great beings is like this:
It is the yoga of the essence without [relative] real things and empty⁶²⁸ of real things other than that.

And:

Śāriputra, bodhisattva great beings who train in this way do not train in concepts of any dharma.

And:

Resting in the equanimity of meditative absorption, with no mindfulness and no mental activity, is the mindfulness of the Buddha.

And:

If even concepts of Dharma are abandoned, why mention what is not Dharma.

And:

The Leader proclaimed that conceptualized perception, is how saṃsāra is displayed [on this side]. Destroying and abandoning conceptualized perception is going to the other side.⁶²⁹

And:

Not thinking of either arising or non-arising is supreme practice of the perfection of prajñā.

And:

A bodhisattva who thinks, “these skandhas are empty,” is coursing⁶³⁰ in conceptualized characteristics; and thus, [that bodhisattva] has no faith in the realm of the unborn, dharmatā.

And:

Freedom from conceptualized perceptions of a variety of real things is coursing in complete peace. [Coursing in complete peace] is coursing in the supreme perfection of prajñā. ...

And:

Likewise, not thinking of phenomena of form, and so forth, having no concept of them at all, and not thinking of their conceptualized characteristics as intrinsic natures, having no concept of that at all
...

And:

Not seeing according to preconceptions of Dharma and non-Dharma, the three times, the three realms, the perfections, and so forth, up to omniscience, is completely perfecting meditation on the perfection of prajñā. ...

And:

Likewise, meditate without notions of identifying mind and its mental factors.⁶³¹

And:

For any phenomenon, do not see, attentively observe, apprehend, contemplate, meditate on, dwell on, mix with, desire, be attached to, take to heart, unite with or, discriminate yourself from notions of: pleasant or painful, permanent or impermanent, self or selfless, peaceful or not, empty or not, having conceptualized characteristics or not, wished-for or not, compounded or not, arisen or not, ceased or not, isolated⁶³² or not, meritorious or not, morally wrong or not, corrupting⁶³³ or not, emotionally afflicted or not, world-transcending or not, emotionally afflicted or completely purified from affliction, applying exertion or not ...

The Buddha did indeed give a great number of very famous extensive teachings like this; However, they should be viewed after having brought it about that you also have the instructions of the glorious bodhisattvas of the tenth level, **so that you can apprehend these teachings according to these bodhisattvas' view of the Buddha's intention.** Therefore, I will not write about these teachings extensively, at this point.

(4). **Teaching the Necessity of the Profound Points of the Oral Instructions [for This Non-Conceptual Meditation Free of Proliferation]**

When you meditate in this style of non-meditation, there are many gates to meditative absorption, called the “precious lamp”, and so forth that unify śamatha and vipaśyanā meditation. To practice these, extraordinary, profound instructions are required for stopping the winds, binding the channels, and so forth. These are taught elsewhere.⁶³⁴

(5). **Ordinary Meditation and Action are Taught Elsewhere**

There are also other renowned teachings about the ordinary conceptual meditations of lovingkindness, compassion, equalizing [phenomena within the single essence], exchanging self and other, visualization of the deities and their environment in the developing stage, and so forth. Presenting all of them here as well would take too many words, and so I will not write about them. Ordinary and extraordinary buddha activity too are taught elsewhere.

(6). **Within This Teaching, Saying Well What Exists, Does Not Exist, and So Forth, and Identifying These**

[In brief,] by applying these key points to body and mind, the [winds in the] channels are bound. When the winds and mind that [moves by being] mounted on the winds are stopped, meditative absorption that unifies śamatha and vipaśyanā can arise well. [At that point,] a pure and correct view is required that knows fully and correctly as they are what exists and what does not exist, [according to the third turning.]

That is because, [to experience pristine wisdom properly,] it is necessary to encounter⁶³⁵ experienced phenomena as they are, distinguishing well according to the different wheels of Dharma, the natural and the artificial, the fundamental way things are and the incidental, the essential kernel and the husk, pristine wisdom and consciousness, the apparent and the non-apparent, *pristine wisdom that is self-arisen and pristine wisdom that is risen from another, self-aware consciousness, and pristine wisdom, the two truths, the four noble truths, the three natures, the five topics, and so forth.*

It is also necessary to encounter⁶³⁶ experientially as they are, the outer, inner, and the non-dual 'other,'⁶³⁷ distinguishing them well according to profound secret mantra.

(7). **Teaching That, To Do This, It is Necessary to Know the Three Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma and the Meaning of Mantra**

Why? Practicing the meaning of the three turnings corresponds with purification of coarse, subtle, and very subtle defilements from sugatagarbha that is like a wish-fulfilling jewel.

First turning practice is in accord with preliminaries to subsequently meditating on the profound, definitive meaning of the Great Vehicle.

Second turning practice is in accord with special meditative absorption that meditates in equanimity [without proliferation] on that profound meaning, [as self-]emptiness.

In third turning practice, a special meditative absorption arises [in subsequent attainment]. Then existence, non-existence, and so forth, are well distinguished in an experiential encounter [with pristine wisdom] that is also in accord with profound secret mantra.

(8). **Teaching by an Example How, in the Three Turnings, Three Stages of Defilements are Purified**

The *Sūtra Teaching the Great Compassion of the Tathāgata*, also called the *Sūtra Requested by King Dhāraṇīśvara*, discusses purifying the defilements of sugatagarbha in stages, according to the three turnings:

Child of noble family, it is like this, for example. Skilled jewelers who know good methods for purifying jewels take a completely unpurified jewel, *of vaidūrya covered with mud*, from the family of precious stones. Soaking it in a sharp mineral salt solution, they completely clean it,⁶³⁸ by rubbing it with hair-cloth.⁶³⁹

However, they do not cease their effort with just that. After that, soaking it in sharp food juice,⁶⁴⁰ they completely clean it by polishing with a woolen cloth.

However, they do not cease their effort with just that. After that, soaking it in the juice of a great excellent medicine, they completely clean it with a sheer cloth. Then, completely purified and free from defilements, it is called “vaidūrya.”⁶⁴¹

Child of noble family, similarly, the Tathāgata knows that the nature of sentient beings that is completely impure **with incidental defilements is really dharmadhātu**, sugatagarbha. He arouses sadness in beings who enjoy saṃsāra. He does so by giving depressing discourses about impermanence, suffering, selflessness, and impurity. By that he makes them enter into the monastic discipline of noble ones **of the first turning**.

However, the Tathāgata does not cease his effort with just that. After that, he makes **those of the Great Vehicle** realize the way of the Tathāgata with discourses about [self-]emptiness, marklessness, and wishlessness, **according to the second turning**.

However, the Tathāgata does not cease his effort with just that. After that—with talk of the third irreversible wheel of Dharma that completely ascertains absolute truth, with completely pure and true talk of purifying the three [aspects of action]⁶⁴² by causes of various natures—he makes sentient beings who abide in all the vehicles enter into the realm of the Tathāgata. When they enter there, they **manifestly** realize the nature of the Tathāgata **within their bodies**. That is called “the unsurpassed object of worship.”⁶⁴³

(9). **Well Discriminating and Resolving the Differences Between the Three Turnings**

Concerning the differences between the three turnings of the wheel of Dharma, in terms of provisional meaning and definitive meaning, and their being taught clearly with excellent distinctions or not, the *Sūtra That Definitively Comments on the Intention* says:

Then the bodhisattva Paramārthasamudgata asked the Blessed One, “At first, in the region of Vāraṇasi, speaking to the ṛṣis in the Deer Park, teaching the four noble truths for those who would purely and truly abide in the Śrāvaka vehicle, the Blessed One fully turned a wondrous, marvelous first wheel of Dharma. Previously no god or human, had ever turned one like it. That wheel of Dharma turned by the Blessed One was surpassable, an occasion **for elimination** by criticism, provisional, and, **on engaging with the words, their actual topics were** disputable.

Then the Blessed One turned a second wheel of Dharma for those who would engage in the Great Vehicle; beginning with absence of arising, cessation, and nature; peace from the beginning; and

natural, complete nirvāṇa. It was wondrous and marvelous in speaking about the aspect of [self-]emptiness. That wheel of Dharma turned by the Blessed One was surpassable, an occasion for **elimination** by criticism, provisional, and disputable.

Then the Blessed One turned a third wheel of Dharma for those purely and truly abiding in all vehicles; beginning with absence of arising, cessation, and nature; peace from the beginning; and natural complete nirvāṇa. It was wondrous and marvelous in possessing excellent distinctions. That wheel of Dharma turned by the Blessed One was unsurpassable, not an occasion **for elimination** by criticism, of the definitive meaning, and not disputable.

When sons or daughters of good family hear this teaching by the Blessed One **of the third turning**; beginning with absence of arising, cessation, and nature; peace from the beginning; and natural complete nirvāṇa; [hearing it] produces devotion. The hearers make an effort to write its words down. Having written them down, they memorize them, read them, pay them worship, purely and truly spread them **to others**, receive reading transmissions of them. They perform activities of expressing them, contemplating them, and meditating on them. [When they do so,] how much merit will these hearers create?

The Blessed One spoke to the bodhisattva Paramārthasamudgata saying, “Such an absolutely noble son or daughter of good family will produce immeasurable, incalculable merit. Though indeed it is not easy to give an example of it, I will present some to you briefly. For example, Paramārthasamudgata, it is like this. If the particles of earth on the tip of a fingernail are compared to the particles of earth of **the whole** earth, they do not come near a hundredth of them, a thousandth of them, or a hundred thousandth of them. No enumerable fraction, exemplification, or comparison comes near it. If the water in an ox’s footprint is compared to the water in the four great oceans, that example does not ... come near it.

Let us say that such an absolutely noble one has the merit of engaging in the combined aspects from producing devotion to meditation, as they are explained in the sūtras of provisional meaning. If that merit is compared to the merit for such a one who combines the aspects from being truly established in producing devotion to being truly established in meditation, as they are explained in the sūtras of definitive meaning, it does not ... come near it ...

According to those words, and so forth, when the [formless] yoga of the perfection of prajñā is being practiced, it is necessary to be free from all conceptions. Therefore, all objects are refuted, in order to stop grasping of them by the perceiver. Many aspects like non-existence, non-establishment, exclusion of everything, and emptiness of everything are diligently taught. However, these teachings are not so diligent in

distinguishing what exists and what does not exist, and so forth. Therefore, the second turning is said to be taught through the aspect of speaking about [negating all conceptions as self-]emptiness.

When the meditative absorption uniting śamatha and vipaśyanā meditation arises by practicing the yoga of the perfection of prajñā, distinguishing what is existent and non-existent and what is empty and not empty is taught. Therefore, we must be introduced to how they abide and how they are. **The reason we need to do this is** because not everything is non-existent and unestablished. That is especially true because the ground in which something is non-affirmingly negated as empty and non-existent is [simultaneously] affirmed as that thing is negated. Also, the ground in which something is determined to be excluded is [simultaneously] determined to be affirmed. Thus, the ground in which all faults are naturally abandoned is realized to abide in self-existence, complete with all the [intrinsic] qualities of the ultimate. Therefore, the third turning of the wheel of Dharma that teaches this is said to possess excellent discrimination.

On the other hand, the second turning, due to its purpose, teaches even things that are not self-empty to be empty of themselves, and so forth. It does not have the excellent discrimination [of the third],⁶⁴⁴ and therefore, is not without internal contradiction. Thus, for several reasons, the Sūtra that Completely Ascertains the Intention says that the second turning is surpassable, an occasion **for elimination** by criticism, provisional, and disputable.

(10). **Clearing Away Many Mistaken Conceptions About These Points**

Some people maintain that the *Sūtra That Definitively Comments on the Intention* is of the provisional meaning. That is not reasonable, because 1) that is never taught by the Buddha in scripture, and 2) there is no logical refutation to its being of the definitive meaning.

Objection: The middle turning is Madhyamaka, and the last is Mind-only. Therefore, the middle turning is of the definitive meaning and the last of the provisional meaning. Does that not refute your maintaining that the third-turning *Sūtra That Definitively Comments on the Intention* is of the definitive meaning?

Answer: That is greatly, nay absurdly, illogical. Neither scripture nor reasoning establishes that this sūtra is a text of Mind-only. This sūtra teaches the ultimate way things are of the Greater Madhyamaka in a way that accords with teachings of the ultimate in the Vajra Vehicle. This scripture says, “the third turning teaches the naturelessness of [relative] phenomena,⁶⁴⁵ no arising, no ceasing, primordial peace, and naturally abiding nirvana.” [These words] establish that it is not a text of Mind-only.⁶⁴⁶

Objection: Since the second turning teaches the perfection of prajñā, it is definitive and unsurpassable. Since the *Sūtra that Completely Ascertains the Intention* teaches the opposite,⁶⁴⁷ it is provisional. The Buddha taught it with a hidden intention of emptiness of self.

Answer: These are the words of someone who has not understood this text very well. This sūtra does not teach that the second turning is provisional and surpassable because it teaches the perfection of prajñā. It teaches that for other reasons, such as that the second turning teaches what is not empty of itself as empty of itself. No arising, no ceasing, primordial peace, and the perfection of prajñā; as taught in the third turning and the Vajra Vehicle; are taught in the second turning as well. However, because they are taught unclearly, clearly, and very clearly [in the second turning, the third turning, and the vajra vehicle] respectively; the meanings are respectively confused, unconfused, and supremely unconfused. Thus, the third turning and Vajra Vehicle have great and very great differences, respectively, from the second turning.

The differences taught [between the second and third turnings] of being surpassable and unsurpassable, and of offering an opportunity for refutation and not, are taught because of differences in the meaning of the profound ultimate being taught respectively unclearly and incompletely and clearly and completely. It is not because of differences in what they teach about the essence of reality – because the essence of ultimate reality is the same in both.

It is the same regarding the superiority of the Vajra Vehicle over the final turning. *Tripitakamālā's Lamp for the Three Modes*⁶⁴⁸ says:

Though the meaning is one, the mantra treatises
Are better because they are not confused,
Have many skillful means, and are without difficulties,
And are created for those with sharp faculties.

Question: What meaning is the same in sūtra and mantra?

Answer: The meaning of the perfection of prajñā is the same in the second turning, the third turning, and the Vajra Vehicle. Likewise, all of the following have the same meaning in those three: Vajrasattva; Vajradhara; the essence inseparable from the fruition that is the absolute ground of emptiness; the goddess Mahāmudrā; Viśvamātā; Vajra-Nairātmyā; Vajravārāhī; EVAM; AHAM; the source of dharmas; bhaga; vajra; secret; great secret; lotus of the essence that is inseparable from the fruition, realizing the absolute ground of emptiness; realm of space and similar terms; sugatagarbha; the dhātu of nirvāṇa; buddha nature; pure self; naturally luminous mind; naturally pure mind; absolute bodhicitta; suchness; emptiness; marklessness; ultimate reality; just that; dharmakāya; svābhavikakāya; the naturally pure enlightened family of the essence, inseparable from the fruition that is the absolute ground of

emptiness; all-pervading dharmatā without establishing or clearing away; the middle that has abandoned the two extremes; self-arising pristine wisdom; the innate nature; the self-existing nature; the changeless perfectly established, and so forth.

All these teachings of its many aspects refer to the space of [dharma]dhātu where everything is naturally pure, the absolute truth of pristine wisdom knowing itself.⁶⁴⁹

Objection: Absolute dharmadhātu does not meet the criteria of the perfection of prajñā. You are calling the object known, [dharmadhātu,] by the name of the subject [that knows it in a certain way through perfecting prajñā].

Answer: This is greatly discordant with reality. There is no **valid** refutation of absolute dharmadhātu being the perfection of prajñā. **Their equivalence in [non-dual self-awareness] is established by valid scriptural sources.** Neither scripture nor reasoning teaches this equivalence to be merely imputed.

Objection: There is such a scripture, because master Dignāga's *Summary of the Eight Thousand Verse Perfection of Prajñā* says:

The perfection of prajñā **is characterized as** non-dual
Pristine wisdom **that is** the Tathāgata.
Since that meaning has been established for it,
These terms occur in the requisite texts and paths.

There the perfection of prajñā is characterized as the non-dual wisdom of the Tathāgata. Absolute dharmatā, [and dharmadhātu,] are not characterized non-dual pristine wisdom [and the perfection of prajñā.] Moreover, dharmatā [and dharmadhātu] do not fully distinguish phenomena, [as prajñā does.]

Answer: Not so. It also says there: "Absolute dharmatā is not material, it is self-awareness." There and in many other completely pure scriptures and reasonings, **including those cited above**, the absolute, dharmatā, [and dharmadhātu] are taught to be [non-dual with self-awareness, which is] pristine wisdom.⁶⁵⁰

In "non-dual pristine wisdom," what is non-dual with what? Dharmadhātu and [the self-awareness that is] self-arising pristine wisdom are non-dually mixed as one. They are of equal taste from the start. This ultimate suchness is [experienced as] inseparable union, the single taste of the ultimate, fundamental nature. That union is the [non-conceptual] way things are for absolute emptiness and compassion, skillful means and prajñā, knower and known, and inseparable awareness and the space of the dhātu.

Pristine wisdom that also fulfills the criteria of the perfection of prajñā unites 1) the perfection of prajñā of the ground and 2) the perfection of prajñā of the ultimate fruition as the inseparable essence of [non-conceptual] suchness.

However, the paths for manifesting this, **what is accomplished by them**, and the [assertions in the] texts that teach this **as their expressed meaning** all consist of mere conceptual imputations. That [we must distinguish the conceptual words and the non-conceptual meaning] is true of the Greater Madhyamaka, mahāmudrā, innate union, the Union of All the Buddhas, vajra yoga,⁶⁵¹ Ati Yoga, Cakrasaṃvara, Hevajra, Guhyasamāja, Kālacakra, **the Ocean of Dākinīs**, and so forth.

All linguistic terms taught as synonyms of suchness⁶⁵² in [all] paths and texts are imputed [words that are established as empty of themselves.] However, all phenomena that occur within [experience of] the inseparable nature of ground and fruition fulfill all the criteria of the [absolute] meaning itself.

The foregoing general commentary on all the profound, ultimate sūtras and tantras is a great releaser of knots in all the vajra words that are taught. It is also a great commentary on the meaning of the intention of what was taught, the great profound intention of all these texts. However, to realize this intention properly, abandoning habitual propensities that arise from former quarrels, we must depend on the four reliances and the lamp of experience, according to the instructions of the tenth level bodhisattvas.

b. **Explanation of the Special Extraordinary View**

(1). **Stating the Purpose of Explaining the Special Extraordinary View in Detail**

Though the last two turnings and the Vajra Vehicle have a single meaning, to practice them, we must first, pass the pass⁶⁵³ of conceptual understanding **by casting aside all ideas**. Then we must rest in meditation in the equality of profound dharmatā in accord with [the formless meditation of the noble ones taught in] the second turning. This kind of meditation is without [conceptual] thoughts and proliferations **[of phenomena,] like deep sleep**.

Then, in attainment subsequent to meditation, there is a time of clear distinction that is **like waking from sleep**. All phenomena are correctly discriminated and well-distinguished, as taught in the final turning and the Vajra Vehicle.

When all this has been recognized, practice of the profound meaning of all the teachings of the Great Vehicle is complete, without error, and perfectly pure. [With this in mind,] I will teach, while distinguishing well how they abide within the fundamental nature, 1) what exists and does not, 2)

what is and is not empty of its own essence, 3) faults that are eliminated and good qualities that are established, 4) what is non-affirmingly and affirmingly negated, and 5) what is abandoned and what is realized.

(2). **The Actual Subject That is Explained**

(a). **Since Emptiness and Non-emptiness, Existence and Non-Existence, and So Forth, are Taught, How a Profound Kind of Emptiness Other than Self-Emptiness is Established**

1'. **The Brief Teaching of the Many Divisions of Emptiness**

a'. **Division of Phenomena as Empty of Their Own Essences and Dharmatā as Not**

Moreover, the *Āṅgulimāla Sūtra*, as rare as the udumvāra flower, says:

Āṅgulimāla asked Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, since you are the supreme one of those who see the great emptiness, what is seeing emptiness in the world? When people keep saying, ‘empty, empty,’ what do they mean? You who have great knowledge, speak quickly! Cut off my doubts.”

Then the youthful Mañjuśrī recited these verses to Āṅgulimāla:

The Buddha is like space.
Space has no marks at all.
The Buddha is like space.
Space arises as markless.

The Buddha is like space.
Space is entirely formless.
Dharmas are like space.
The Thus-gone⁶⁵⁴ is dharmakāya.

Wisdom is like space
Thus-gone is the wisdom kāya.
Ungraspable, untouchable,
Thus-gone is desireless wisdom.

Liberation is like space.
Space is also markless.
Liberation is Buddha, the Tathāgata.
Āṅgulimāla, how could you ever know
What is completely empty and nothing at all?

Then Āṅgulimāla spoke again to youthful Mañjuśrī. “It is like this, for example. As rain falls from a great cloud, a person with a child-like nature picks up a hailstone. Thinking it is a precious vaidūrya jewel, that person takes it home, but cannot hold it, because it is extremely cold. That person says, “I will keep it is a treasure,” and carefully encloses it in a vase. Then, that lump of hail melts and evaporates. Seeing that the vase is dry, that person thinks, “It is

empty!” and can say no more.

Similarly, venerable Mañjuśrī, someone who meditates on extreme, [vacuous] self-emptiness, thinking that is very profound, sees in agony that when all phenomena are correctly analyzed by reasoning, according to that view, they are eliminated. Even **absolute** liberation that is not empty **of its own essence** is seen as and thought of as empty.

It is like this, for example. [The foolish person above who] thought that a lump of hail was a jewel, **thought that real jewels would also become empty and vanish, if they were placed in a vase and meditated on as empty.**

You too think that **absolute** phenomena that are not empty **of their own natures** are empty **of their own natures**. Having [rightly] seen that **relative** phenomena are empty **of their own natures**, you [wrongly] say that **absolute** phenomena that are not empty [of their own natures] are also eliminated and empty.⁶⁵⁵ However, empty phenomena are one thing, and non-empty phenomena are quite another.

Like the hailstone, the ten million afflictive emotions are empty. Like the hailstone, phenomena on the side of non-virtue are quickly eliminated. However, the Buddha is like precious vaidūrya **that does not melt**. Ultimate liberation is like precious vaidūrya **that does not melt**.

Absolute space is the form of the buddhas. The liberation of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas is formless, but the absolute liberation of the buddhas is **something else**, form. Even though the liberation of the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas is formless, do not say “A defining characteristic of liberation is being empty **of its own essence**. **By doing so**, you create a conceptualized perception of division in what is inseparable.

Mañjuśrī, a house built in a city is empty because there are no people in it. A vase is empty **of water**, because there is no water in it. A stream or ravine is empty **of water**, because no water flows in it. Is not an interval in a village without houses [commonly] called “empty?”⁶⁵⁶ Is a house called empty because it is empty of everything? Is it not called empty, not because it is empty of everything, but because there are no people in it? Is a vase called empty because it is empty of everything, or because, though it is not empty of everything, it is empty of water? Is a stream called empty because it is empty of everything, or because, though it is not empty of everything, no water is flowing in it?

Similarly, **absolute** liberation is not empty of everything, **as it has absolute qualities**. It is said to be empty, because it is free from faults. The blessed Buddha is not empty **of absolute qualities**, but he is free from faults. He is called empty because he does not have the

ten million afflictive emotions of gods and humans.

Alas venerable Mañjuśrī, you are making noises like a fly that makes meaningless sounds like “zi zi.” You do not know the meaning of “empty” and “not empty” as they are. Naked Jains also meditate on everything as empty. Say no more, fly of a naked Jain that you are!

The passage above from “The Buddha is like space.” to “Aṅgulimāla, how could you know what is empty and nothing at all?” is in accord with some people’s assertions that the Buddha teaches the ultimate to be self-emptiness of everything that is nothing at all. This introduction according to the knowledge of the noble one Mañjuśrī occurs before the difference between self-emptiness and emptiness of other is resolved by Aṅgulimāla.

Then Aṅgulimāla, teaches the emptiness of the phenomena of the afflictive emotions and non-virtues, according to the example of the hailstone that melts and becomes non-existent. In that way, he teaches that all phenomena belonging to relative truth are empty of their own natures.

Then, using the example of precious vaidūrya that does not melt and become non-existent, he teaches the non-emptiness of liberation, ultimate, absolute buddhahood. In that way, he teaches that world-transcending, absolute truth, dharmakāya, is not empty of its own essence.

Then using the examples of an empty house, vase, and stream, he teaches the emptiness of all faults. [The meaning is that,] like these examples, ultimate liberation is taught not to be empty of its own essence, but to be empty of other things. The point of the accompanying descriptions of non-emptiness, like “Liberation is not empty of everything”, “the blessed Buddha is not empty,” and “non-empty phenomena are ‘other’”, is that absolute dharmatā is not empty of itself. The very numerous assertions in other sūtras and tantras of absolute non-emptiness, saying that something is not empty are similar.

The noble one Mañjuśrī actually has good knowledge of both emptiness of self and emptiness of other. However, Aṅgulimāla teaches that incompetent people who maintain only “Everything is empty of itself,” are no better than naked Jains. From the viewpoint of exponents who distinguish properly what is and is not empty of itself, those who say everything is empty of itself are [no better than buzzing flies]:

Alas venerable Mañjuśrī, you are making noises like a fly that makes meaningless buzzing sounds like “zi zi.” You do not know the meaning of “empty” and “not empty” as they are. Naked Jains also meditate on everything as empty. Say no more, buzzing fly of a naked Jain that you are!

And also, he says:

You think that phenomena that are not empty are empty, so that you eliminate phenomena that are not empty as empty.

These words, and so forth, are taught as instructions for those who have decided without qualification⁶⁵⁷ that emptiness of self, in which everything is empty of its own nature, is the profound, ultimate way things are. Self-emptiness and ultimate elimination [of a phenomenon] is determined by [assertions about its existence] being unable to bear analysis for consistency, [and hence for true, absolute existence.]⁶⁵⁸

What it means to say that “the Buddha is permanent,” that “the Buddha’s liberation is form,” that “space is also this same Buddha form,” and so forth, will be better understood later when I explain ‘other’⁶⁵⁹ forms, completely pure forms, ‘other’ sensory phenomena, the form of dharmatā, the form of suchness, form that transcends the three times and the three realms, and so forth.

The remaining points are easy to understand.

The way in which the absolute, dharmatā, is empty, [by being empty of other,] is clearly taught again and again in this *Āṅgulimāla Sūtra*, so you should certainly consult this sūtra of ultimate Madhyamaka. You should not think that what *Āṅgulimāla* says is not true, because he formerly performed great evil deeds. By the time he said these things, he had become a buddha.

That is also the case because this very sūtra says that south of this buddha field, there was once another buddha field called “Adorned with all Jewels” with as many buddhas as the grains of sand in sixty-two Ganges rivers. In that field was abiding a buddha named “Seen by all the World with Joy, Completely Exalted great Effort,” who emanated as *Āṅgulimāla*.

b'. **Teaching the Way of Empty Emptiness and Non-Empty Emptiness**

If everything were empty of itself, completely liberated dharmakāya would also be empty of itself. If so, it would be completely non-existent, like empty things in the tradition of the naked Jains, and so forth. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

Moreover, liberation is empty [in such a way that it is] not empty of its own essence. “Emptiness of [something that is] empty of its own essence” is self-emptiness that is nothing at all. That “nothing at all” is “empty emptiness” like the liberation of naked Jain extremists, who say that since liberation does not exist, it is empty emptiness.

True, complete liberation is not like that. It is emptiness that is not empty of its own essence. For example, a small vessel that is called “a small vessel for water, butter, milk, beer, honey, and so forth,” may be without and empty of water, oil, milk, beer, honey, and so forth, [at a certain time;] but it is still called a vessel for water, and so forth. The vessel is not distinguished as empty or not empty of itself [by being empty or not empty of contents].

When that vessel is described as an “empty vessel” **in relative truth,**” it is a mistake to describe it as being without form, smell, taste, and touchable qualities, hence non-existent. When that vessel is said not to be empty [in relative truth], how could it be empty of water, **oil,** and so forth,? [It could not.]

The point is that the relative vessel is not empty of being a relative real thing, but it is empty of water, and so forth. Absolute liberation is also like that. It is [paradoxically] described as “form and non-form,” “empty, and not empty;” **because it is empty of relative form, and so forth, but is not empty of absolute form, and so forth.**

And:

It is like this. The twenty-five realms of cyclic existence, the all-pervading afflictive emotions, all suffering, all characteristics, and all compounded activities of compounded things are non-existent. Therefore, liberation is said to be empty of them, as a small vessel is said to be empty of yogurt. Saying that liberation is not empty [of itself] says that it has real permanent form, bliss, selfhood, and purity that are motionless and unchanging. That is like saying that, the qualities of form, smell, taste, and touch of the small vessel exist, and they are not empty in it.

Liberation is like the small vessel in those ways. **However, these two are not alike in all ways.** A small vessel breaks, sooner or later, when it meets the right conditions; but absolute liberation is never **[destroyed]. Because it is not compounded,** liberation is indestructible. The indestructible **absolute** is true, complete liberation. True, complete liberation is the Tathāgata.

There, and so forth, this is very extensively explained. Then, using the example of a cow being non-existent in a horse and a horse being non-existent in a cow, the Buddha teaches in the same sūtra that the absolute, dharmatā, great nirvāṇa is not empty of itself, but empty of other:

Child of noble family, it is like this. Nirvāṇa is not formerly non-existent, like a pot at the time it was clay. It is not non-existent due to cessation, like a pot after it is broken. It is not forever non-existent, like the hairs of a tortoise or the horns of a rabbit. Rather it accords with non-existence of one thing in another. This is said in order to eliminate maintaining that that absolute truth is unknowable.

Child of noble family, a horse does not exist in a cow, but it is not correct to say that a cow does not exist at all. A cow does not exist in a horse, but it is not correct to say that a horse does not exist at all. Nirvāṇa is also like that. Nirvāṇa does not exist in the afflictive emotions, and the afflictive emotions do not exist in nirvāṇa. Therefore, their relationship is said to be the non-existence of one thing in another.

There, and so forth, this is presented very extensively.

c'. **Teaching the Ways Suchness is Empty, in Being Empty of Incidental Defilements and in Being Tathāgatagarbha**

The Buddha's teaching in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, well-distinguishes empty and non-empty for form and the other skandhas:

Kauṇḍinya, **the form of incidental defilements is empty of its own nature.** By the condition of that empty form ceasing, complete liberation is attained as the form **of sugatagarbha** that is not empty **of its own nature. These two points** should be known to be extended to feeling, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness.

The form of incidental defilements has the emptiness of non-things, and so for the rest of the five skandhas,. That kind of emptiness is **empty emptiness** where each empty phenomenon is empty of its own essence.

The emptiness of the form, and so forth, of sugatagarbha is that of the ground of emptiness, the essence of non-things. That kind of emptiness is **non-empty emptiness that** is the absolute's emptiness of other.

d'. **Identification of the Great Emptiness of Secret Mantra as Different from Self-Emptiness**

Glorious Vajrapāṇi says:

Likewise, that without aspects possessing all aspects is the cause **other than, or supreme [over, ordinary causes].** That [cause] is the perfection of prajñā, the great emptiness possessing the supreme of all aspects.

That is taught in his *Commentary on Cakrasaṃvara*. This [great emptiness] is emptiness with [an existent] reference object.⁶⁶⁰ **Its being taught again and again as** "Emptiness possessing the supreme of all aspects" has the intention of the absolute's emptiness of other things. Form, and so forth that are empty of themselves cannot serve as the **supreme aspects possessed** by the perfection of prajñā. That is because the **naturally limitless qualities of the perfection of prajñā that possesses the supreme of all aspects** cannot be complete **in form, and so forth that are empty of themselves.**

Similarly, the great emptiness, the five empty topics, and the six empty drops are not empty of themselves. They are primordially unobscured as the invincible equal taste [of the essence and its buddha qualities]. The completely pure 'other' skandhas, sense constituents, sense-powers, objects, **powers of action**, and so forth, of the vajra nature are also self-arising pristine wisdom that transcends interdependent arising. All these are taught to be the great maṇḍala of Vajradhātu.

The profound tantras teach this kind of emptiness [of other] that is the ultimate, definitive meaning using terms like these: the partless, omnipresent, all-pervading one, the great one with the powerful ten aspects,⁶⁶¹ the greatly illuminating vajra sun, the most excellent of syllables, A, the supreme nature of all things, and excellent, pleasing, formless form.⁶⁶²

When they teach these terms, the intention of them all is the absolute empty of other that is the real, absolute essence of unreal, relative things. That should be [experientially] apprehended, by relying on the lamp of the profound instructions.

Similarly, in the especially exalted and completely immaculate sūtras, tantras and treatises, many synonyms of emptiness are taught that have a single meaning: suchness, the pure and true ultimate, the dhātu without characteristics, absolute truth, dharmadhātu, the mind of absolute enlightenment, the syllable E, the secret, the great secret, the realm of space, the womb or bhaga, the water-born lotus, the vajra, the triangular source of dharma, the syllable A, the lion throne, place of bliss, the blissful,⁶⁶³ Mahāmudrā consort, Prajñāpāramitā Consort, Variety Consort Viśvamātā, Vajravārāhī, Vajranairātmya, The Lady of Various Forms, and so forth.

The intention of the emptiness taught by these terms is not unreal self-emptiness, but the absolute ground of emptiness of other, emptiness of unreal things, in the real essence, **non-empty emptiness, non-arising, [eternal] emptiness, emptiness having the supreme of all aspects, emptiness [causally] unrelated to the relative, and emptiness as an established phenomenon that is not cast aside.**

2'. **The Extensive Explanation Resolving These Points**

a'. **Resolving the Ground of Emptiness and What is Empty Within It**

This way of dividing emptiness into emptiness of self and emptiness of other was taught within the greater Madhyamaka by the noble one Asaṅga. He presented the ultimate abhidharma of Madhyamaka in his *Abhidharmasamuccaya*:

What is the definition of emptiness? When something does not exist in something,⁶⁶⁴ the second is correctly seen to be empty of the first. What remains there exists. [Knowing] that is well and truly knowing it as it is. That is called “entering into emptiness without error, correctly, as it is.”

What does not exist in what? In the skandhas, sense constituents and sense sources, there is no self, **existing as me and mine**, that is an eternal, stable, everlasting, and changeless possessor of the qualities **of an individual. Nor is there such a self of phenomena.** The skandhas, and so forth, are empty of these **two kinds of**

[relative] self.

What remains there [after this negation]? That should be understood to be **the ground of** selflessness and emptiness [of other things, in the non-empty ground of that selflessness and emptiness]. With this intention, the Blessed One said, “The existent is known as existent, the non-existent is known as non-existent, and so forth. They are fully, correctly known as they are.”

Asaṅga teaches that we must correctly see what phenomena do not exist in the ground, making that ground empty of them. The remainder, the ground that is empty of those phenomena is perfectly established dharmatā.⁶⁶⁵ That ground always exists. [When that is known,] dharmatā is fully and correctly known as it is. This realization that empty phenomena are empty of themselves, and the [non-empty] ground of emptiness [that remains] is empty of all [these] other things [that are empty of themselves,] is called “entering into emptiness correctly as it is, without error.” If, on the contrary, it is maintained that everything is empty of itself, or that everything is empty of other for that matter, that is wrong entering of emptiness. That is the point.

Objection: Doesn’t Asaṅga say above that the skandhas, sense constituents and sense sources are the grounds empty of the individual self with its me and mine? Why maintain that the ground of emptiness is perfectly established dharmatā?

Answer: To get started, he does say that the skandhas, sense constituents, and sense sources belonging to the dependent nature, are [relative] grounds of emptiness of the [imagined individual] self with its me and mine and [emptiness of] all other imagined natures [of phenomena].⁶⁶⁶

However, the ultimate, [absolute,] ground of emptiness is perfectly established dharmatā that is empty of both the dependent and the imagined.⁶⁶⁷ That is the single, [ultimate] meaning [of the term “emptiness.”] Any [‘other’ skandhas,] sense constituents and sense sources belonging to uncompounded [suchness] are also taught to be [aspects of] suchness.

[In brief,] dharmatā is the ground of emptiness of the self with its me and mine. Therefore, the ultimate ground of emptiness is perfectly established dharmatā. That is faultless [reasoning]. Also, let us consider the statement:

What remains there? It should be understood to be **the ground of** selflessness that exists as emptiness [of anything else].

These citations say that [after the first step], the selfless dependent exists, as the remainder [empty of] the imagined. However, the remainder after [the next step], the dependent also being [established as] empty, is perfectly established [absolute] dharmatā without [the relative] selfhood [of either the imagined and the dependent].

In brief, the relative is non-existent, and absolute Dharmatā is purely and truly existent. With this intention, the Blessed One said, “The existent is known as existent and the non-existent is known as non-existent, fully and correctly known as they are.”

[In sum,] 1) the ground of emptiness of the imagined exists [relatively] as the dependent; 2) the ground of emptiness of the imagined and the dependent, exists [absolutely] as perfectly established dharmatā; and 3) no ground empty of the perfectly established is possible, as dharmatā is always completely self-existing as the suchness of everything.

A phenomenon that was a ground of emptiness of dharmatā would be empty of dharmatā. If so, the nature of phenomena, dharmatā, would not pervade all phenomena. [Then, it could not be the nature of all phenomena.]

With the intention of teaching these three different kinds of emptiness of the three natures, the *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* of the ultimate Madhyamaka says:

When non-existent emptiness is known,
And the same for existent emptiness,
And the same for emptiness of the nature,
Then it is said that emptiness is known.

The imagined is non-existent emptiness of what never existed,⁶⁶⁸ and the natures within the dependent are existent provisionally,⁶⁶⁹ but they are emptiness in the ultimate way things are. Those two are incidental fabrications. The perfectly established, dharmatā, exists as the emptiness of the fundamental nature of things. That kind of emptiness is empty of the essences of unreal things, but it is not empty of its own nature.

Because the perfectly established is empty of the dependent, the dependent [phenomena of interdependent arising] are said to be non-existent. Maitreya’s *Distinction of the Middle and Extremes*, a text of the ultimate Madhyamaka says:

The three natures are forever non-existent,⁶⁷⁰
Existent in [the relative,] not the ultimate,⁶⁷¹
And the ultimate that is existent but not.⁶⁷²

The ultimate Madhyamaka of the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* teaches three kinds of emptiness related to the three natures: emptiness is said to be of three kinds; emptiness of nature, the imagined; likewise, emptiness of the non-existent;⁶⁷³ and the kind of emptiness of the nature.⁶⁷⁴

In the *Five Hundred Stanza Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra*, the Victorious One also distinguishes the three kinds of emptiness of unreal things, real things [of the relative], and the [reality of the absolute] nature.

b'. **How These are Taught to Exist and Not to Exist in the**

Fundamental Nature, Suchness

Moreover, in his *Discrimination of Dharmas and Dharmatā* of the ultimate Madhyamaka, the victorious one Maitreya says the following, regarding objects that do and do not truly exist **respectively**:

These two⁶⁷⁵ are one **in essence**,
And do not have separate **essences**;
Since⁶⁷⁶ existent and⁶⁷⁷ non-existent
Are different⁶⁷⁸ and not different.

Thus, **the difference between phenomena and dharmatā is the kind of difference that refutes one of the two**. As his *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

For the child-like, obstructed from reality.⁶⁷⁹
Forms that are not real are always appearing.
For bodhisattvas who have removed obstructions,
The pure and true itself⁶⁸⁰ is always appearing.

And:

Absence of the real and pure reality⁶⁸¹
Should be known as not appearing and appearing.⁶⁸²

And:

Though what is other than that⁶⁸³ does not exist at all,
Because, for all beings, their minds are entirely obscured,⁶⁸⁴
They abandon existence, and they are attached to non-existence.⁶⁸⁵
How grave and serious is this aspect of worldly delusion!

There, and so forth, it is taught that the imagined and the dependent do not purely and truly exist, while the perfectly established, dharmatā does. The main points of emptiness of self and emptiness of other are also taught, **such as the difference between 1) emptiness of itself of relative reality – empty emptiness that is mere non-existence and that is not pervasive, because it is nowhere at all; and 2) emptiness of other things of non-empty, absolute reality – non-empty emptiness, all-pervading emptiness, and so forth**.

With this intention, it is said **in the *Tantra Expressing the Many Characteristics of the Absolute***:

Those who possess pristine wisdom know what exists and what does not exist.

“What exists” is the fundamental way things are, the truly existing absolute empty of other. “What does not exist,” is the relative, mere self-emptiness of what does not truly exist [as anything at all.]

When suchness is taught in the *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle*, the absolute is said to be empty of other. The following verses give the criteria of that kind of absolute:

Not existent, not non-existent, not the same and not other.
 Not born or destroyed, not diminishing or increasing,
 Not completely purified, [already] completely pure.
 These are the characteristics of the absolute [that is suchness].

Regarding the intended meaning of this passage, not existent refers to the imagined and dependent, which are not truly existent. Not non-existent refers to perfectly established dharmatā. The essence of these two is not the same and not other, because no truly existing essence of the imagined and the dependent is established at all. **The difference between the first two natures and the third, which corresponds to the difference between the two truths, is the kind of difference that refutes one essence of the two.**

Perfectly established dharmatā that is empty of the imagined and the dependent is uncompounded [and eternally changeless.] Therefore, it is not born or destroyed, and not diminishing or increasing.

The absolute is [already] naturally completely pure, and therefore, it has no need of purification. In that sense, it is not completely purified itself. To attain it, incidental defilements must be purified from it, but the absolute itself has these [above five characteristics that exclude the dichotomies of the relative.] These are the defining characteristics of the absolute.

c'. **How, When This is Realized, Glorifications and Deprecations of Existence, Non-Existence, Eternalism, and Nihilism are Transcended**

In accord with the above teaching of not existent, and not non-existent, Maitreya's *Discrimination of the Middle and the Extremes* says:

The imagined and the dependent are not existent, and perfectly established dharmatā is not non-existent.

The intention of all of the very many immaculate texts of the Madhyamaka textual tradition that teach freedom from the extremes of existence and non-existence is as follows:

1. All the interdependently arising things of the relative are not existent. If that is realized, we do not fall into the extreme [view] of existence. We are liberated from extreme views of exaggerated, glorifying [assertion].
2. Absolute dharmatā that transcends interdependent arising is forever not non-existent. If that is realized, we do not fall into the extreme view of non-existence. We are liberated from extreme views of denigrating denial.

Some have an alternative way of maintaining that the absolute neither exists nor does not exist absolutely, [alleging] that it is a single phenomenon that is both not existent and not non-existent. [They say

that] is the definitive meaning free from extremes.⁶⁸⁶ That [approach] contradicts the intention of the Buddha and the great bodhisattvas, and it does not accord with the real way things are.

d'. **Teaching That This Way of Emptiness is the Intention of the Mother of the Victorious Ones**

Vasubandhu's *Extensive Commentary on the Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra* in *One Hundred Thousand Stanzas* says:

Characteristic of perfectly established **dharmatā** is its emptiness of **relative phenomena that possess** the characteristics of the imagined.

Also:

In the ground that is completely free from phenomena of the imagined and forms of imputed dependence, [forms that are] forms only of perfectly established suchness are called "the forms of dharmatā."

Also:

The kind of form – form **of the ground that is** empty of the form of the imagined and imputed [dependence, form that] has the characteristics of perfectly established suchness – is called "the form of dharmatā." That kind of form does not have the essence **of relative** form, because it is isolated in every respect from phenomena of **relative** form.

Also:

"What is the emptiness of other things?" and so forth, teaches the emptiness of things other [than the absolute]. Regarding dharmatā, the true way of abiding of phenomena,⁶⁸⁸ and other synonyms of [absolute] suchness; whether relative tathāgatas arise in the world or not, [absolute] dharmatā **always** abides primordially **and changelessly** as it is. [Relative] things, phenomena that are other than the essence referred to by these synonyms, [included within] the skandhas, **sense constituents**, and so forth, are non-existent. Therefore, the essence is said to be "empty of [those] other things."

There, and so forth, with many approaches, the way that the absolute is empty of other is extensively taught. Moreover, Vasubandhu's *Extensive Commentary on the Exalted One Hundred Thousand, Twenty-five Thousand, and Eighteen Thousand Stanza Perfection of Prajñā Sūtras* says:

The emptiness **synonymous here with absolute dharmatā** is not empty of or free from itself. It is empty of or free from other **relative** things;⁶⁸⁹ for example, as a vase is said to be empty because it is free from water.

There, and so forth, the absolute is taught to be empty of other. That the absolute is perfectly established is taught by many⁶⁹⁰ [terms for its many] aspects: 1) suchness; 2) unerring suchness; 3) suchness that is not other; 4) dharmatā; 5) the dhātu of phenomena; 6) the abiding of phenomena; 7) the faultlessness of phenomena; 8) the pure and true ultimate; 9) the dhātu of the inconceivable; 10) the indestructible perfectly established; 11) the non-erroneous **perfectly established**; 12) the changeless **perfectly established**; 13) **the perfectly established** as the essence; 14) **the perfectly established** as the cause of enlightened phenomena; 15) **the perfectly established** at all times; 16) the irreversible perfectly established; 17) **the perfectly established** as suchness; and 18) **the perfectly established** beyond the path of logic.

e'. **How These Kinds of Emptiness Have the Meaning of Being Without Establishing or Clearing Away and Without Empty and Non-Empty**

The *Sublime Continuum with its Commentary* says:

What is this **absolute** Tathāgatagarbha, that is said to be **the** emptiness **of inseparable awareness and the space of the dhātu**?

Here ⁶⁹¹ there is nothing whatever that is to be cleared away,
And ⁶⁹² there is nothing at all that is to be established.
Look purely and truly at the pure and true.⁶⁹³
If the pure and true is seen, there is total liberation.⁶⁹⁴

The nature ⁶⁹⁵ pure of the incidental is empty of things⁶⁹⁶
That have the characteristic of being separable;
However, it is not empty of unsurpassable qualities ⁶⁹⁷
That have the characteristic of being inseparable.

What is taught here? The Tathāgata essence is naturally completely pure. For that reason, this luminous dhātu has no pervasive afflictive emotions that need to be cleared away. Its nature is **primordially** free from incidental defilements. Since it is already primordial, complete enlightenment, no **immaculate absolute qualities** at all need to be **added and** established. The phenomena that are inseparable **from the essence, transcending in number the grains of sand in the river Ganges**, are also pure dharmatā, because they are [inseparable aspects of] that nature.

Thus, the emptiness and non-emptiness of tathāgatagarbha has two divisions: 1) it is empty of the divisible, separable covering of all the afflictive emotions; and 2) it is not empty of its indivisible, inseparable buddha qualities, transcending in number the grains of sand in the river Ganges.

That is what is being said. Thus, when something does not exist in something, the second is correctly seen to be empty of the first, but what remains there always ⁶⁹⁸ exists. That is knowing it purely and truly as it is.

These two stanzas are free from extremes of exaggerated glorification saying that the **relative exists**. They are free from inappropriate denigration **saying that the absolute does not exist**. Therefore, they teach the characteristics of emptiness without error.

f. **How These Kinds of Emptiness are Taught to Exist and to be Realized and Not to Exist and to be Abandoned, in the Way Things Are**

The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

Thus, do not say that the four qualities of permanence, bliss, selfhood, and complete purity are empty **of their own essence**.

There, and so forth, profound emptiness that is not empty of itself is taught again and again. Anything empty of its own essence does not exist in the fundamental way things are, but what remains [after negating it] does exist there. This same sūtra teaches:

The buddha nature of a tathāgata is two-fold, **buddha qualities that are** existent, and **faults that are** non-existent.

The naturally present, absolute qualities that are existent are those like the following: the thirty-two major marks; the eighty excellent minor marks; the ten powers; the four fearlessnesses; the three accomplishments or objects of mindfulness; the great lovingkindness; the great compassion; and immeasurable, **primordially self-existent** meditative absorptions, like the meditative absorption of Going like a Hero, the Vajra-like Meditative Absorption, the Meditative Absorption of Skillful Means, and the meditative absorptions of the five pristine wisdoms.

The **incidental, fabricated** phenomena that are **naturally** non-existent [for a tathāgata] are as follows: past virtuous, non-virtuous, and neutral actions of the Tathāgata; karmas; causes; effects; ripening; afflictive emotions; the five skandhas; and the twelve links of interdependent arising.

Child of noble family, just as those are **naturally, completely** existent and non-existent, so are the **unmade, absolute presence and absence** of the following: **the presence of** virtue and **absence of** non-virtue; **the absence of** corruption and **presence of** non-corruption; **the absence of** the worldly and **presence of what is** world-transcending; **the presence of the** exalted and **absence of what is** not exalted; **the absence of the** compounded and **presence of what is** not compounded; **the presence of the** pure and true and **absence of what is** not pure and true; **the presence of the** peaceful and **absence of what is** not peaceful; **the absence of** being disputatious and **presence of** not being disputatious; **the presence of the** nature or dhātu of phenomena and **absence of what is** not; **the absence of** what is afflicted **by emotions and presence of** what is not so afflicted; **the absence of** what is [karmically or causally] self-

perpetuating and **presence of** what is not [karmically or causally] self-perpetuating; **the presence of** the peaceful and **absence of what is not** peaceful; **the presence of** the ethically positive and **absence of what is not** positive; **the presence of** what exists **in the fundamental way things are** and **absence of** what does not; **the absence of** what is within the three times and **presence of** what is not; **the absence of what is within** time and **presence of** the timeless; **the presence of** permanence and **absence of** impermanence; **the presence of absolute** self and **absence of what is not**; **the presence of absolute** bliss and **absence of what is not**; **the presence of what is** primordially, completely pure and **absence of what is not**; **the presence of absolute** form, feeling conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness and **absence of relative** form, feeling conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness **that are not absolute**; **the presence of the six absolute** inner sense sources and **absence of relative inner sense sources that are not absolute**; **the presence of the six absolute** outer sense sources and **absence of relative inner sense sources that are not absolute**; and **the presence of the absolute** twelve links of interdependent origination and **absence of the relative** twelve links of interdependent origination that are not **absolute**.

These qualities are said to be respectively existent and non-existent, or present and absent, in the buddha nature of a tathāgata. Up to **the absence of** wrong craving and **presence of what is not** [wrong craving] in buddha nature, these are similar.

There, and so forth, this is extensively explained. Depending on the profound instructions that have no faults of contradiction, there is good discrimination of the following pairs: what exists and what does not exist; what is renounced and what is realized; what is determined to be cut off and determined to be established; what is non-affirmingly negated and what is affirmingly negated; the way things are with regard to the two truths, absolute and relative; the way things are with regard to sugatagarbha **the fundamental true nature**, and incidental defilements, **or fabrications**.

Through these and other such points [concerning the two truths,] you need to apprehend well how things are. Otherwise you will not see profound suchness, because, as Nāgārjuna says in his *Root Verses on the Middle Way*:

Those who do not know
The divisions of the two truths
Do not see the deep suchness
Of the Buddha's teachings.

- g'. **Clearing Away the Wrong Conception That the Absolute Ground of Emptiness That is Empty of Other Contradicts Scripture**

Objection: The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* teaches seven kinds of emptiness. It says that emptiness of one thing of another is the lowest of the seven, and that it should be abandoned. How is your “absolute empty of other” any different?

Answer: The objection does not apply here. The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* teaches that one thing being empty of another is the worst kind of emptiness, intending emptiness of one relative thing of another. That is like a house being empty of people or a vase being empty of a pillar. The absolute nature being empty of **all** incidental, relative phenomena is different from that and greater. The difference is very much greater than great. As that same sūtra says:

Mahāmati, what is the pristine wisdom of the noble ones, the great emptiness? It is like this. The wisdom of the noble ones that I personally apprehend is empty of all conceptual views and all faulty, habitual propensities. That is why the absolute pristine wisdom of the noble ones is called the great emptiness.

From the seven kinds of emptiness mentioned above, the absolute pristine wisdom of the noble ones is the one called the great emptiness, because it is empty of all other faulty phenomena and all habitual propensities [of experiencing them]. A building being empty of horses, elephants, and so forth, is taught to exemplify how the absolute is empty of other, but that emptiness is not the meaning of the great emptiness. Neither self-emptiness of the relative nor of the absolute [applies to it]. Emptiness of self cannot even do the job of [the seven kinds of] relative emptiness, let alone that of absolute emptiness [of other]. Similarly, [absolute] emptiness of other cannot do the job of the various kinds of relative emptiness.

h'. **How That Ground of Emptiness is Taught as the Great Emptiness of the Profound Way Things Are**

The absolute empty of other is the nature of the limitless qualities of dharmakāya. It exists as an especially exalted kind of emptiness. The absolute pristine wisdom of the noble ones is not just [self-]emptiness that is established as nothing at all. Therefore, as in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, it is called “the great emptiness.” The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

Child of noble family, the “great emptiness” is like this. The perfection of prajñā is called “the great emptiness”.

The profound texts of secret mantra also speak of “the changeless, great emptiness,” and “the five empty topics of the great emptiness.” Glorious Vajrapāṇi says:

Thus, “that without aspects that has all aspects” is the cause **unproduced by other causes**, the perfection of prajñā. That is the great emptiness possessing the supreme of all aspects.

Also:

Accomplishment is accomplishment of the great emptiness, with

apprehension of its qualities. It is the self-awareness of yogins' pristine wisdom.

The exalted Lord of the World, [Kalkī Puṇḍarīka,] says in the *Stainless Light*:

The great mind of all the buddhas is the vajra full moon at the end of the sixteenth day of the month. This is **the innate joy of pristine wisdom, or pristine wisdom itself**, as the great emptiness.

Also:

"Likewise, the great body of all the buddhas is the great emptiness,"

And:

The immaculate light of the vajra moon is the five topics of the changeless, great emptiness.

Taught there and in many other pure textual traditions, as expansive, immaculate vajra light, the absolute ground of emptiness of other is taught using the name "the great emptiness." It is taught by extremely many other names as well, and so it is necessary to be competent about their intention. As the *Sūtra of the Great Emptiness* says:

Ānanda, it is like this, for example. This good building in Mrīgāramata is empty of elephants, horses, oxen, sheep, chickens, and pigs. It is also empty of jewels, grain, cowry shells,⁶⁹⁹ and gold. It is empty of male and female slave workers, and wage workers,⁷⁰⁰ as well as lay men, women, boys, and girls. However, it is [also] like this: It is not empty of monks of the Saṅgha, and others who attend on them.

Ānanda, when something is empty of something, the [first] is empty of the [second]. That is correctly seen. However, the remainder that still exists there does exist. Knowing that is correctly knowing it as it is. Ānanda, that is encountering emptiness correctly as it is, without error.

After extensively teaching emptiness of other with these words, and so forth, the Buddha speaks further, saying:

[These buddhas] do not have a situation with afflictive emotions depending on contaminations of desire, saṃsāric existence, and ignorance. However, they do have a situation with afflictive emotions depending only on the body that produces the conditions of life, with its six sense sources.

Ānanda, thus, when something is non-existent in something, that the first is empty of the second is correctly seen. What remains existing there does exist. That too is correctly known as it is.

Ānanda, it is like this: Unsurpassable entering into emptiness is being without contaminants. That [absence] is due to all

contaminants being exhausted and liberated into **dharmatā**, the manifestly uncompounded **ground of these contaminants' non-existence**.

Ānanda, the tathāgatas, the arhats, the truly, completely enlightened buddhas who arose in the past, were like this. They had no contaminants, because all their contaminants were exhausted and liberated into the manifestly uncompounded **ground of these contaminants' non-existence, dharmatā**. That unsurpassable entering into emptiness was manifested, accomplished, and abided in through the body.⁷⁰¹

At the end of that passage, the same is taught about present and future buddhas. Exemplified by the good building of Mrigāramata that was empty of horses, elephants, and so forth, but not of the Saṅgha; many ways of being empty of some phenomena, but not of others are taught.

After that, it is taught how the buddhas are empty of all contaminations, but are not empty of completely liberating, uncompounded emptiness itself. That passage clearly teaches the absolute ground of emptiness that is empty of other. Entering [into realization of] that ground is entering into emptiness correctly as it is. That entering is not erroneous. That teaching also teaches by entailment that entering into [only] the kind of emptiness where everything is empty of its own essence is erroneous.

i'. **Abandoning Glorification and Deprecation of the Textual Tradition Teaching This**

1''. **Teaching That There are No Scriptural Sources For, and There are Refutations of, the Assertion That the Third Turning is Mind-Only**

Objection: The final turning and [in particular] the *Sūtra That Definitively Comments on the Intention*, consists of texts of Mind-only. It is unreasonable to claim that these explain some kind of ultimate Madhyamaka.

Answer: No pure and correct sources say these are texts of Mind-only.

Objection: They are texts of Mind-only, because they teach the three natures.

Answer: Then the texts of the *Mother of the Victorious Ones* [that you favor] are also texts of Mind-only, because they too teach the three natures. For example, the *Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra in Twenty-five Thousand Stanzas* says:

The Blessed One spoke to the bodhisattva Maitreya saying,
“Maitreya, bodhisattvas practicing the perfection of prajñā who abide in competently distinguishing phenomena should know how to classify distinctions of form in terms of three aspects. They should also know how to designate distinctions from feelings,

conceptualized perceptions, formations, and consciousness up to the phenomena of buddhahood [in terms of those three aspects,] like this: 1) this is completely imputed form, **the imagined**; 2) this is partially imputed form, **the dependent**; and 3) this is the form of **perfectly established** dharmatā.

Then the same is extensively taught from feelings to the phenomena of buddhahood. The three kinds of forms, and so forth that are so-classified are the forms, and so forth, of the imagined, dependent, and perfectly established natures. The same text also teaches that the ground of emptiness of the imagined and dependent is the absolute dhātu, dharmatā:

Whether [relative] tathāgatas arise or not, dharmatā, the dhātu in which phenomena abide as they are, abides **always and everywhere**. The forms of dharmatā are those with naturelessness, [or emptiness,] of completely imputed **or imagined** forms [in the ground of] imputed or imagined forms. They are absolute forms of the pure and true ultimate, suchness. That suchness is also the absolute **ground of** selflessness, naturelessness, and emptiness of the permanence, eternity, stability and stability over time of the dependent.

This is taught from the feelings, conceptualized perceptions, formations, and consciousness of dharmatā, to the phenomena of buddhahood of that nature of phenomena. The same text also teaches what the three natures are like:

Maitreya, what are completely imputed forms [of the merely imagined?] They should be viewed as insubstantial, **in the sense that they are not established as existing even relatively**.

What are partially imputed?⁷⁰² forms [of the dependent?] They are conceived of as substantially existing [in such a way that] the [relative] substances they are viewed as being do not operate independently, but arise and function **under** the causal **power of other** substances like themselves.

What are the forms of [perfectly established] dharmatā? They are not [absolute] substances, **which would be contradictory**,⁷⁰³ **hence essenceless**; nor do they exist as **relative** substances, **which would also be contradictory, hence essenceless**. They should be viewed by being distinguished as absolute. They should be viewed as truly existing phenomena, but not as truly existing substances.

The same is taught from feelings to the phenomena of buddhahood. **The Eighteen Thousand Stanza Perfection of Prajñā** has similar teachings. The Five Hundred teaches that phenomena of form, and so forth, exist as non-things, flawed things, and real things. These three are distinguished in three successive chapters. It is also taught that the Śrāvakas and

Pratyekabuddhas have no appropriate abandoning and purification of [the first two]. For that reason, they do not attain complete enlightenment, but continue to suffer in saṃsāra.

2". Teaching That Profound Commentaries on the Third Turning Agree With That

The intention of the above passages is the same as that taught by with good distinctions by the exponent of the Greater Madhyamaka Maitreya in *Discrimination of the Middle and Extremes*:

These natures are eternally non-existent,
Conventionally existent, but not as suchness,
And existent and non-existent as suchness.
That is how the three natures are maintained.

[That was as previously explained.] And:

Entirely conceptual,⁷⁰⁴ and imputed meaning,⁷⁰⁵
And the meaning of dharmatā; they are this and that.⁷⁰⁶

And:

Untrue conceptions exist.⁷⁰⁷
The two⁷⁰⁸ do not exist.
Emptiness is in that.⁷⁰⁹
That also exists as that.⁷¹⁰

Not empty, not non-empty,⁷¹¹
By that all is explained.⁷¹²
By existence not existing, existence.⁷¹³
That is the middle path.⁷¹⁴

As taught above, a text is not established as a text of Mind-only because it teaches the three natures. In the textual tradition of the greater Madhyamaka, Vasubandhu's commentary on the Hundred Thousand, Twenty-five Thousand, and Eighteen Thousand Stanza Perfection of Prajñā Sūtras and his commentary on the Hundred Thousand Stanza Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra present the three natures [taught in those sūtras,] saying that 1) the ground of emptiness of the imagined is the dependent; 2) the ground of emptiness of the dependent is the perfectly established; and 3) there is no ground of emptiness of the perfectly established.⁷¹⁵

These sūtras say that both the imagined and the dependent are [empty] imputed natures whose ground of emptiness is the perfectly established absolute, but there is no ground empty of the perfectly established absolute. Moreover, Dignāga's *Summary of the Meaning of the Eight Thousand Stanza Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra* says:

The perfection of prajñā teaching
Truly relies on three;
The imagined and the dependent

And the perfectly established.

With the word “non-existent”
The imagined is refuted.
By examples of illusion,
The dependent is truly taught.

Four kinds of purified dharmas⁷¹⁶
Proclaim the completely established.
Within the Perfection of Prajñā,
The Buddha has no other teaching.

Since the three natures are taught [in the *Eight Thousand*], those who maintain that the three natures are exclusive Dharma terms of Mind-only are very mistaken. Moreover, Kamalaśīla’s *Illumination of the Middle Way* says:

It is not the case that exponents of Madhyamaka proclaim no presentation of the three natures. Otherwise how could what contradicts true seeing be abandoned?

Also:

By teaching the intention of the [three natures and the corresponding] three kinds of naturelessness, the path of the Middle Way that is free from the two extremes is taught. A textual tradition of the definitive meaning alone is founded.

Also:

“All phenomena are established as natureless,” is also the tradition of the Great Madhyamaka. The three natures were taught with the intention of three kinds of naturelessness.

That is not contradictory with what was taught previously. It is like this. The essence of interdependently arising things, the essence of the dependent, is well-known not to be imputed in every respect. However, according to those who explain the relative, dependent phenomena arising by the power of conditions can have no real, [intrinsic] essence. Therefore, dependent arising, [like the merely imputed or imagined,] is natureless. That is extensively taught. Also, the master of the great Madhyamaka Nāgamitra says about the three natures in his *Door of Entering into the Three Kāyas*:

From the three essences being
Abandoned, well-known, and pure,⁷¹⁷
The three kāyas are attained;
So, these three are included within them.

The commentary on that stanza by the master of the great Madhyamaka Jñānacandra says:

The three natures, the imagined, dependent, and perfectly

established, are taught to be made fully known by abandonment,
examples [of illusion,] and manifestation in experience,
[respectively.]

These and similar passages refute **some** who maintain that there is no presentation of the three natures in Madhyamaka tradition. Those who say such things either have not read these texts, or they have not rightly understood their meaning.

They have also not read or have not understood the meaning of *The Five Hundred Stanza Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra*. That text explains, in three chapters, how phenomena of form, and so forth, exist as unreal things, bad things, and real things, and it also explains the immense disadvantages of not knowing that. Many others who are competent with this sūtra, truly seeing and well apprehending [its meaning], teach the same thing.

Many textual traditions that actually transcend Mind-only, but that some confuse with Mind-only and proclaim them as such, teach the three natures. The *Sūtra that Definitively Comments on the Intention* says:

It is like this. In abandoning the extreme of glorification that says, “The fundamental nature exists relatively” and the extreme of denigration that says “The fundamental nature does not exist absolutely,” what renounces these two extremes by means of the middle path is prajñā directed towards them. That prajñā fully knows as they are the meanings of the three gates of liberation: emptiness, wishlessness, and marklessness. It also fully knows as they are the meanings of the three natures: the imagined, dependent, and perfectly established.

There it says that we must be extremely capable regarding the intention of teaching the three natures in texts that teach the Middle Way free from extremes. If we are not, we may mistakenly think merely teaching the three natures disqualifies a text’s being beyond Mind-only. By such nonsensical talk, we will come to abandon the Dharma of masters of the greater Madhyamaka like Vasubandhu, Dignāga, and Daṃṣṭrāsena, mistakenly thinking that they say that the perfection of prajñā is Mind-only.

3". **Teaching, in Particular, that Maintaining Maitreya’s Discrimination of the Middle and Extremes to be Mind-only has Such Faults**

Likewise, it is mistaken to say that texts like *Discrimination of the Middle and Extremes* are texts of Mind-only because they teach the three natures, eight collections of consciousness, and so forth. The three natures and eight collections of consciousness are also taught in many sūtras and tantras of the ultimate Middle Way. **In the ship of Khandro Gyatso’s commentary [on the above text] as well, many presentations of the three natures are taught.** Furthermore, when *Discrimination of the Middle and*

Extremes says, “All is name only,” the meaning taught for that statement contradicts the view of Mind-only, **which maintains that relative consciousness is absolute**. And:

With the exception of dharmadhātu itself,
Phenomena do not exist like that.

Also:

Since dharmadhātu naturally
Is completely pure, like space,
Duality⁷¹⁸ is incidental.

Also, “the extremes of unity and difference”, and so forth, teaches a middle free from fifteen **sets of two opposite** extremes, contradicting Mind-only.

Likewise, Vasubandhu’s commentary on “That is the path of Madhyamaka,” contradicts the Mind-only [teaching of the absolute existence of relative mind,] because it says:

Thus, this [verse] is like what is said in the Perfection of Prajñā
Sūtras, and so forth, “All this is neither empty **of the absolute** nor
not empty **of the relative**.”

The meaning of the verse Vasubandhu is commenting on accords with what is quoted above. So does the following:

Consciousness, to which a variety of cognitions
Of objects, sentient beings, and selves appear,
Arises and grows, and so it does not exist.⁷¹⁹
Since it is non-existent, so are they.

Vasubandhu’s commentary says:

The [dualistic] objects of consciousness are non-existent,” means that apparent phenomena of objects and beings do not exist [as what they appear to be.] Appearances of a [relative, individual] self and [its] cognition [of other objects] are also erroneous appearances. Since [dualistic] objects do not exist, the [dualistic] consciousness that apprehends them is also non-existent.

His saying that [identifying] mind, the [conceptualized] mental sense, and [dualistic] consciousness exist in the relative, but are non-existent in the absolute also contradicts Mind-only.

Objection: The following statement from Maitreya’s *Discrimination of the Middle and the Extremes*, establishes the text as one of Mind-only:

Depending on apprehension⁷²⁰
Non-apprehension⁷²¹ arises.
Depending on non-apprehension,⁷²²
Non-apprehension⁷²³ arises.

Answer: Not so, as it says depending on non-apprehension of objects, non-apprehension of real objects, even of cognition arises.”⁷²⁴ Also, his commentary on the emptiness of fifteen **sets of two** extremes says:

By this knowledge that external objects are unreal, knowledge of mere cognition itself is also eliminated, because without real objects, cognition of them is impossible.

That is so, because what is taught transcends Mind-only. If those who possess the extraordinary instructions of the trilogy of bodhisattva commentaries look at this well, they will realize that Maitreya’s Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes teaches the entire path of the Great Vehicle with its ground and fruition as well. It is not a text limited to Mind-only.

4". **Teaching That Some are Mistaken by Not Knowing the Division of the Two Truths in Mind-Only**

In the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, Mind-only is taught as a stage; but later, truly transcending that stage, the Middle Way without appearance is taught.⁷²⁵ Then, transcending that as well, there is the Middle Way with appearance.⁷²⁶ The sūtra teaches that if we do not arrive there, we do not see the profound meaning of the Great Vehicle:

With reliance on mind-only,
Outer objects are not conceived.⁷²⁷
Depending on their non-appearance,⁷²⁸
Mind-only too is transcended.

Depending on pure observation,⁷²⁹
Non-appearance⁷³⁰ too is transcended.
Dwelling on [mere] non-appearance,
Yogins do not see the Great Vehicle. ...⁷³¹

Likewise:

Free from all compounded phenomena,
[Consisting of] grasped objects and grasping subject,
The ground is seen that is the absolute mind.
I explain this [ground] as the meaning of “mind.”

“Only” is the dhātu of the essence
That has abandoned [all] conditions and things.⁷³²
This total purity⁷³³ that is the ultimate essence,⁷³⁴
Is **the kāya that** I explain as “only.”

Because it is free from the compounded object, perceiver, and [all the] conditions of relative mind, the ground in which these appearances arise is taught to be the ultimate essence, dharmadhātu, the body vajra,⁷³⁵ supreme purity from incidental defilements.

That is absolute mind, [non-dual with all phenomena,] and it is called “mind-only”⁷³⁶ in that sense, Likewise, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* says:

Reversing all kinds of **bad** views,
[We] abandon conceived and concept.⁷³⁷
The unborn without reference point,⁷³⁸
I explain this⁷³⁹ as mind-only.

Neither a thing nor non-thing,⁷⁴⁰
Abandoning things and non-things,
Suchness free from mind⁷⁴¹
I explain this as mind-only.

Ultimate⁷⁴² emptiness, suchness,
Nirvāṇa and dharmadhātu,
Mind’s body of variety,⁷⁴³
I explain this as mind-only.

That says that the [absolute] ground free from relative mind, suchness, the true pure ultimate, natural nirvāṇa, dharmadhātu, the luminous body of variety of all-good mind, Samantabhadra, free from all extreme views of existence, non-existence, and so forth, is taught as the meaning of mind-only. Also, the same sūtra says:

Without external appearance,
Mind appears as variety,⁷⁴⁴
As body, enjoyment, and realm.
I explain this as mind-only.⁷⁴⁵

These words teach mind-only as the ground without incidental defilements of external appearances, sugatagarbha, dharmadhātu itself. The ground, [mind-only,] appears non-dually as a variety of phenomena, as body, enjoyment of experience, abodes,⁷⁴⁶ and so forth, within absolute mind. This absolute mind-only that transcends relative Mind-only is explained again and again. It should be understood depending on the profound instructions of the trilogy of bodhisattva commentaries. Therefore, make no mistake about texts like the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* that teach absolute mind-only, by saying that these are texts of [relative] Mind-only that do not transcend [relative] consciousness. There is an extremely great difference between transcending and not transcending [relative consciousness].

Teachings of worldly Mind-only may not be ultimate, but they are still skillful means that are gates for entering into suchness. Regarding worldly Mind-only, the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* says:

Variety rising in mind
Due to habitual tendencies,
Of external appearance to humans
Is known as worldly Mind-only.

This is the [conceptualized] Mind-only so well-known to logicians. Such an approach is not suitable for the ultimate mind-only [that is beyond concept of the Greater Madhyamaka,] as the same sūtra says:

As long as mind⁷⁴⁷ is engaged,
We are **like** worldly nihilists.⁷⁴⁸

And:

If the mind engages
With the things of grasper and grasped,
Since that is mere worldly mind,
It is not fit for mind-only.⁷⁴⁹

And:

Like clouds in empty space,
Mind does not appear.⁷⁵⁰

Mind⁷⁵¹ accumulates karma.
Wisdom clears it away.
By prajñā there is attainment
Of non-appearance and powers.⁷⁵²

5". **How Absolute Mind-Only is Taught in the Profound Texts of Secret Mantra**

In accord with that, the glorious *Kālacakra Tantra* of the ultimate Greater Madhyamaka teaches that absolute mind-only is the ground in which relative mind has primordially ceased:

Mind-only, the essence of mantra,
Completely surrounded by deities,
The nature of pain and bliss,
The inseparable four noble truths.

And:

Mere appearance of mind, arising from one's own **[actual] all-good**
mind,
like an image **of divination** in a mirror,
That on which all the buddhas' children and buddhas depend,
relied on by lords of yogins. ...

That teaches mind-only as the self-arisen absolute, inseparable awareness and the space of the dhātu, Vajrasattva and Lady Mahāmudrā.

The absolute mind-only that is the intention of all these [tantric passages] is the same absolute mind-only taught in the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra and other profound texts from the tradition of the third turning. [The emanation of exalted] lord Avalokiteśvara, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, gives similar teachings, when he speaks of ultimate reality [in the *Stainless Light*]:

...this is absolute mind whose nature is emptiness with objects and

compassion without objects,

The [*Vajra Tent of the Ḍākinīs*] says:

As it is in space, so, it is in mind.

The person abiding there is the excellent Buddha.

By meditating on mind, the meditator is purified.

Outside of [this] precious mind, one with Ratnasambhava,

There is no buddha **nature**, and there are no sentient beings.

Also, **for example**:

As space exists as the ground of all the elements,

And also, as the ground of all phenomena,

The pure,⁷⁵³ supremely blissful nature⁷⁵⁴ of mind,

The space-like purity⁷⁵⁵ that is the nature of mind,

Is also the ground of all phenomena.

The nature of objects and the powers of sense

Is not something that is outside of mind.

Distinct appearances, such as those of form,

Are appearances only of **absolute** mind itself. ...

There absolute mind is explained. By meditating on absolute buddhahood as vast, uncompounded mind, like space,⁷⁵⁶ the meditator is completely purified [of defilements of the relative.]

Absolute precious mind, the ground of all, the space-like ground of all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, the **primordially pure** nature, is the innate mind of supreme bliss, **Cakrasaṃvara**.⁷⁵⁷ This absolute mind, [in itself] without aspects, possesses all the aspects of [absolute] objects and sense powers [as its non-dual display. Saraha says of this absolute mind:]

Sole mind itself, that is the seed of everything,

From which there emanate saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,

Bestows the fruition of everything that is desired,

I prostrate to that wish-fulfilling gem of mind.

He is talking about absolute mind like a wish-fulfilling gem, dharmatā that is the ground of all saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. **Explaining this kind of mind as relative mind is not his intention.** Likewise, the glorious *Vajra Garland Tantra* says: “The dhātu is taught to be bodhicitta.” That is, dharmadhātu is taught to be absolute bodhicitta, meaning enlightened mind.⁷⁵⁸

The *Mahāmudrā Drop Tantra* also teaches dharmadhātu as absolute mind, saying, “Be mindful of the space of the dhātu as mind, ...”.

The glorious *Saṃpuṭa*⁷⁵⁹ says, **regarding absolute mind, like space, the ground of emptiness**:

It is partless **and** supremely subtle,

Reality of mind in the form of a drop,⁷⁶⁰

Possessing light that is of very great brilliance,

Ever-abiding in the midst of the heart.

And:

With light like immaculate crystal,
Luminous bodhicitta,⁷⁶¹
Reality of the five wisdoms. ...⁷⁶²

Those words too explain absolute, enlightened mind. That luminous nature of things always abides in the hearts of all beings as a partless, supremely subtle drop. This all-good, absolute mind is also taught to be endowed with the five pristine wisdoms. Moreover, the glorious *Ocean of Dākinīs* says hard to find within the three-fold world, abiding⁷⁶³ at the beginning, middle, and end, as absolute mind that is free from **all** extremes,⁷⁶⁴ with the equal taste **of emptiness and bliss**. ...

That stanza teaches that absolute mind with the equal taste of freedom from extremes, always abides [pervasively] in the beginning, middle, and end. Yet it is hard to find for worldly people. The glorious *First Buddha* says **of this absolute mind**:

Neither arising nor ceasing,
The object of knowledge seen here,
Is your own mind and no other.⁷⁶⁵

There it says that, when the absolute is seen, the object of knowledge apprehended is your own mind.

6". **Showing the Intention of Some in Teaching Relative Mind-Only**

Objection: Maitreya's *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras* is a text of Mind-only, because it says:⁷⁶⁶

Bodhisattvas, having well-accumulated
Transcendent⁷⁶⁷ collections of limitless merit and pristine
wisdom,⁷⁶⁸
Making very certain all their thoughts of Dharma,⁷⁶⁹
Realize verbal expression as the cause of objects.⁷⁷⁰

Thus, knowing objects to be mere verbal expression,⁷⁷¹
They truly rest their appearance in mind-only.
Then, free from characteristics of duality,⁷⁷²
They realize dharmadhātu in their experience.⁷⁷³

They realize there is nothing other than mind⁷⁷⁴
Then that even mind is non-existent.⁷⁷⁵
Then, wisely knowing there is no duality,
They abide in dharmadhātu that is without it.⁷⁷⁶

By the power of non-conceptual pristine wisdom,
The intelligent are always equal in all.⁷⁷⁷
Through that,⁷⁷⁸ the thicket of gathered faults is purified.
Like curing poison with a great medicine.⁷⁷⁹

Answer: This is not a text of Mind-only. “Then they realize that even mind is non-existent” shows that its teaching transcends Mind-only. Moreover, in this Great Vehicle, bodhisattvas who have gathered the accumulations [of merit and pristine wisdom,] realize that everything in the three realms is empty of the two kinds of selfhood. By apprehending that, they enter into suchness. As the *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras* describes it:

Aware of two-fold selflessness in what belongs to existence,⁷⁸⁰
 The intelligent, knowing equality, by grasping, enter that.⁷⁸¹
 Then as mind rests as **cognition**, even that does not appear.⁷⁸²
 That is supreme liberation, free from fixated reference.⁷⁸³

Also:

When the ground of accumulation and progress exists,⁷⁸⁴
 [That is when outer phenomena] are seen to be name-only.⁷⁸⁵
 Because name-only is seen, when that has been seen,
 Later, that is not seen....⁷⁸⁶

On the occasion of the bodhisattvas’ four aids to ascertainment [of the path of preparation,] they abide in Mind-only. Directly after that, they realize experientially that even mind does not exist. At that point, they truly pass beyond Mind-only [and are ready for the path of seeing emptiness.]

This approach is called “the means for entering into the characteristics of non-existence.” It is also taught in [Vasubandhu’s] *Commentary on Maitreya’s Discrimination of the Middle and Extremes*. Asaṅga’s *Summary of the Great Vehicle* too describes it as a means of “entering that.” That is, it is taught as a means or gateway of entering suchness [on the path of seeing,] which is not restricted to Mind-only.

How do we enter into the perfectly established essence? We enter after eliminating conceptualized perception, even of cognition-only. At that time, bodhisattvas have [already] destroyed conceptualized perception [of phenomena as] separate objects. They have no more possibility of [projecting verbalized] mental expressions that arise from habitual patterns [of language onto absolute mere appearance as delusive] appearance of [separate] objects [of the relative].⁷⁸⁷ Subsequently, even solidifying perception as cognition-only, does not arise for them. Also:

With the onset of pristine wisdom and non-conception,
 All objects, for that reason, do not occur.
 Understand objects⁷⁸⁸ to be non-existent.
 Without any objects, objects cannot be cognized.

Statements there and elsewhere that even [conceptualized] cognition does not exist are quite incompatible with proclamations that exponents of [ultimate] mind-only maintain the true existence of absolute consciousness, [like worldly Mind-only.]

7". **Clearing Away Faults of Denigration of Other Texts Like the**

Abhidharmasamuccaya

Similarly, it is mistaken to say that texts like Asaṅga's *Abhidharmasamuccaya* are texts of Mind-only, because they teach the all ground consciousness. The all ground consciousness is taught again and again, both in the profound tantras and in texts in the tradition of the ultimate Middle Way like the trilogy of bodhisattva commentaries.

Similarly, these works do not become texts of Mind-only by teaching the [absolute] skandhas, sense-constituents, and sense sources; because those topics too are taught again and again in the profound sūtras and tantras of the Great Madhyamaka and their commentaries. Thus, the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* quotes a sūtra that is beyond Mind only:

Bodhisattvas,⁷⁸⁹ by meditative equanimity,
Because they see **all objects as merely** mental reflections,
From reversing perception from concepts⁷⁹⁰ of external objects,
Grasp as true their perception of concepts **of mere cognition**.

In that way, they abide in **mere** internal mind.
They apprehend the non-existence of all grasped objects.⁷⁹¹
Then the grasper too is non-existent, and then,
With no reference point at all, **dharmatā** is encountered.⁷⁹²

Other scriptures beyond Mind-only are also cited there:

In the state where eyes and ears
As well as nose, tongue, and body,
Mind, and name and form,
[All] cease, without remainder...

And:

Where the eyes have ceased, and there is no conceptualized
perception of colors, and so forth, [phenomena within the other
senses,] up to conceptualized perception of phenomena [in the
mental sense]. With no conceptualized perception of phenomena at
all, the way of abiding of things as they are is apprehended.

The *Abhidharmasamuccaya* refutes the four extremes of interdependently arising phenomena, just as the second turning does, teaching the natureless of arising, that all phenomena, neither truly rise nor cease, primordial peace, natural nirvāṇa, emptiness of the two kinds of [relative] self, and so forth. That text also possesses the profound instructions of the *Bodhisattva Trilogy*. If you look it over well without preconceptions, abandoning all [prejudiced] assertions postulating truth and falsity and powerful habitual patterns due to [critics'] previous defamation; the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* does teach a temporary stage of Mind-only, but in the end, it is clearly a text beyond Mind-only.

Moreover, the *Abhidharmasamuccaya* does not become a text of Mind-only by teaching the existence of dharmatā as the absolute ground empty of the two kinds of selfhood. If it did, it would absurdly follow that the same was true of all the texts of the Madhyamaka tradition that teach the absolute empty of other. For these same reasons, assertions that Maitreya's *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras* is a text of Mind-only are also cleared away.

Objection: The *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras* says:

In order to lead some,⁷⁹³
And that others may grasp truly,⁷⁹⁴
The perfect buddhas teach
One vehicle to the uncertain.

That passage provisionally teaches one vehicle. [That is exclusively a teaching of Mind-only.] Therefore, this is a text of Mind-only.

Answer: This text does not provisionally teach one vehicle. When it says:

In order to lead some,
And that others may grasp truly,

It **clearly** teaches the **actual** purpose of teaching one ultimate vehicle. It is absurd to say that teaching that purpose entails that the *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras* is provisional teaching.⁷⁹⁵

Objection: That text says:

Some are truly exclusive in their wrong behavior.
Some completely overcome their white phenomena.
Some lack virtue corresponding with liberation.
Some with minimal whiteness are without the cause.⁷⁹⁶

[Teaching a cut-off family is an exclusive teaching of Mind-only.] Since it teaches a family of those cut off from attaining enlightenment, the *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras* is a text of Mind-only.

Answer: This too does not follow. The developing enlightened family is cut off in many people, but no one's natural enlightened family can be cut off. It is also taught **that the natural enlightened family cannot be cut off** in texts of the Middle Way like the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, the *Aṅgulimāla Sūtra*, and the *Sublime Continuum*. It should be understood that the developing family can be cut off, even though all beings have the essence of buddhahood; because many have failed to plant seeds of liberation or to generate sufficient virtue to develop them. Even so, the *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras* says extensively that cutting of the natural enlightened family is impossible:

As the suchness in all sentient beings
Is not different, and when it is purified
The level of a Tathāgata is attained,

All beings, therefore, have the Tathāgata essence.

Also:

As space goes into all the forms there are,
That essence goes into all the classes of beings,...

The same text says:

Because of pristine wisdom observing suchness,⁷⁹⁷
And dualistic grasped objects being abandoned,
And experiencing how bodies receive bad states,
It is said that these states are abandoned by the intelligent.

In the commentary, Vasubandhu says:

This fully teaches how, by completely knowing the three natures, the essence of the dependent is exhausted, and how, by apprehension of suchness, the completely established essence is completely known. [First,] by completely abandoning dualistic grasped objects, the imagined is abandoned. [Then,] by completely knowing the dependent, through perceiving how bodies in bad realms are received and how the body receives bad states, the [relative] all ground consciousness [that supports the dualistic phenomena of the dependent]⁷⁹⁸ is exhausted.

Exhausting the dependent and the all ground is truly beyond Mind-only. Therefore, no correct evidence appears: 1) that Mind-only maintains a cut off family and Madhyamaka does not; 2) that Mind-only is provisional, because it asserts a single vehicle; 3) that the three natures are exclusively the Dharma terminology of Mind-only; and 4) that teaching the all ground and the eight collections of consciousness establish a text as one of Mind-only.

The same is true for the rest of the pervasive allegations that give Mind-only a bad name. There are many major refutations of these allegations. They should be rejected like poison. These errors occur by 1) not having encountered the instructions of the bodhisattva commentaries; 2) not knowing how to differentiate the two truths for mind-only, and 3) by being systematically mistaken about the meanings of certain words in certain texts.⁷⁹⁹

Likewise, in one or another profound tantra, absolute mind is taught again and again, through many aspects, as great mind, vajra mind, enlightened mind, the mind of bliss, the great passion, the great anger, the great ignorance, the 'other' mind and mental factors, 'other' consciousness, and so forth.

No phenomena that are other than [absolute mind] exist in the fundamental way things are. Therefore, these terms have the same meaning as teaching that all phenomena are included within dharmadhātu. Though Mind-only is taught temporarily in the especially exalted texts of

the tradition that teaches the profound and vast meaning of the great Madhyamaka, if we [mistakenly] conclude that they are exclusively texts of Mind-only, [we will abandon them.] This will be an action of abandoning the holy Dharma [altogether.]

8". **What a Great Absurdity It Is, if by Teaching Temporary Mind-Only, a Text Becomes Exclusively One of Mind-Only**

Objection: By teaching Mind-only, even as a temporary measure, a text becomes a text of Mind-only.

Answer: Then, by the same reasoning, the Mother, Maitreya's *Ornament of Clear Realization*, and so forth are Śrāvaka texts, because they teach the tenets of the Śrāvaka vehicle. Mind-only may be taught as a stage in profound sūtras of the third turning like the *Sūtra that Definitively Explains the Intention*, and treatises like Maitreya's *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle, Differentiation of the Middle and Extremes*, and Asaṅga's *Yogācāra Levels, Summary of the Great Vehicle*, and *Summary of Abhidharma*. However, these texts' final teaching of the great Madhyamaka very much transcends Mind-only, and it is one with the meaning of secret mantra. These texts should not be disparaged.

Objection: [Yogācāra means Mind-only.] Therefore, the very name of the treatise the *Yogācāra Levels* from the *Collection of Levels* establishes it as Mind-only.

Answer: [By that criterion,] Āryadeva's *Four Hundred Stanzas on Yogācāra* is also established as Mind Only.⁸⁰⁰ Asaṅga's *Vastusaṃgraha*, also known as the *Actuality of the Levels*, says:

The path of the **ground that is the inner** or Middle Way is without a self of individuals and without a self of phenomena. It completely abandons the two extremes **of existence and non-existence, eternalism and nihilism, and so forth**. It completely abandons extremes of exaggeration **that say incidental phenomena exist in the fundamental nature**, as well as extremes of denigration **that say the fundamental nature of how things are does not exist at all**.

In these words, and so forth, these texts that teach again and again that the Middle Way free from extreme concepts should be seen and realized. Also, though Vasubandhu's *Thirty Verses* is famously a text of Mind-only,⁸⁰¹ in the end it also speaks of what is beyond cognition-only. At first it [teaches Mind-only], saying:

When apprehended objects of awareness
Are not apprehended, at that time,
We are abiding in cognition only.

However, in the end, it teaches transcending cognition-only. Just after the above, it says:

Without the grasped object, there is also no grasper.

There is no mind, no conceptualized observation.
That world-transcending wisdom transforms the manner,
By abandoning these two acceptances of bad stages.

That⁸⁰² is the uncontaminated dhātu.
Inconceivable virtue and stability.
That is bliss, the body of liberation,
Which then is known as the quality of a great sage.

There is no mind, no conceptualized apprehension contradicts the assertion by advocate of Mind-only that mind, [in the sense of relative, dualistic consciousness,] exists absolutely. Why so? This passage teaches the uncontaminated dhātu, inconceivable dhātu, absolute bliss, changelessly stable dharmatā, truth as the [nonconceptual], absolute way things are, the kāya of primordial liberation and the phenomena of its qualities that are inseparable from a sage's dharmakāya, transcending in number the grains of sand in the river Ganges. [Dharmatā and its qualities] utterly transcend the phenomena of dualistic consciousness. Therefore, they contradict the doctrine of Mind-only that consciousness is absolute truth. Similarly:

The established is prior, and that in which
All others are always non-existent. ...

Those words are teaching perfectly established dharmatā, suchness. Dharmatā is [beyond Mind-only,] because it is non-dual pristine wisdom that completely transcends the phenomena of consciousness.

Mind-only is indeed taught in these texts as a temporary means, but ultimately teachings completely transcending consciousness are taught. Classifying these as texts of Mind-only violates the authors' intention.

For example, analysis of the treatise the *Twenty Verses*, *Viṃśaka-kārikā*, by Vasubandhu, [establishes that it] does teach Mind-only provisionally, but ultimately teaches what transcends it. The autocommentary teaches this transcendence quite clearly, so you need to receive the intention of the very pure texts of this tradition very skillfully.

[In brief,] if these terms beyond the phenomena of consciousness are properly taught, pristine wisdom, buddhahood, dharmakāya, svābhavikakāya, suchness, and so forth are beyond the tradition of Mind-only. As Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's glorious *Stainless Light* puts it:

Regarding this, among advocates of consciousness, there can be no kāya of pristine wisdom. There can be no kāya of vajra sunshine that is a truly, completely enlightened buddha. Why are there no kāya of pristine wisdom and no kāya of vajra sunshine that is a truly, completely enlightened buddha among advocates of consciousness? This is what is asked. It is because advocates of consciousness abide in phenomena of consciousness, while the true, complete enlightenment of the buddhas is beyond the nature of

consciousness.

In the twenty-third verse of *Expressing the Names of Mañjuśrī* the Tathāgata speaks similarly of:

Holding the way of non-dual pristine wisdom
That is beyond the nature of consciousness;
Holding the kāya of the three times' buddhas,
Self-existing without [delusive] conception.

Even teaching the emptiness of the two kinds of selfhood, and freedom from grasper and grasped transcend Mind-only.⁸⁰³ The glorious *Stainless Light* says:

Now I shall teach the fault of the Yogācārins' grasper.⁸⁰⁴ Advocates of all of the three realms being consciousness **wrongly** maintain consciousness **as absolute truth**.

Also:

The Yogācārins too have a grasper that is consciousness.

These words are beyond Mind-only, because true existence of a [dualistic] grasper is incompatible with absence of a self of phenomena. **When some maintain that Mind-only is free from both grasper and grasped, that contradicts these very clear texts.**

9". **Teaching That If the Tantras are Taught as Mind-Only, Their Intention is Not Known**

Similarly, claiming that profound tantras like the Kālacakra are not beyond Mind-only is extremely inappropriate. Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's glorious *Stainless Light* says:

The competent do not maintain
That consciousness is absolute.
Suchness is known by Madhyamakins
As free from one and many,

Like a lotus in the sky,⁸⁰⁵
Not existent, not non-existent,
Not both of the two, not neither,
Free from the four extremes.

Also:

One and many are one. Unequal and equal are equal.⁸⁰⁶
Such statements are the doctrine of Madhyamaka.

These and other profound Dharma teachings that transcend Mind-only are extensively taught [in tantra.] That is also the case, because [the subject of] ultimate tantras like the Kālacakra, along with their mantras, deities, and maṇḍalas, is self-arising pristine wisdom that transcends mind, the mental,

and consciousness. Do not deprecate these profound teachings that truly transcend Mind-only. There will be the great, bad karma of abandoning the holy Dharma.

10". **Teaching the Beneficial Qualities of Discrimination of the Instructions and the Faults of Its Absence**

For the above reasons, [many] excellent distinctions of the final turning that are well explained in the bodhisattva commentaries are [further] clarified by the extraordinary instructions of the profound tantras, such as these: existing or not existing in the way things are; emptiness of self and emptiness of other; non-affirming negation and affirming negation; decisive cutting off and decisive affirming; abandoning as delusion and realizing as pristine wisdom; empty self-emptiness and non-empty other emptiness; **what is empty, and what remains; what is exhausted and what remains; what the way things are is free from and what remains; what is excluded and what remains; what is unestablished and what remains; and what ceases and what remains.**

If these distinctions are made [properly], the meaning of the middle turning also becomes extremely clear, as if one were looking at great mountains from the sky high above them. However, without these [special teachings and instructions], there is no possibility of emptiness higher than self-emptiness; a pure self; uncreated pristine wisdom; awareness inseparable from the space of dharmadhātu; the essence of the inseparable ground and fruition; and the like.

Instead, there will be a garland of bad views, like saying that sugatagarbha is a provisional teaching about things that do not truly exist. Degenerating corruptions of view will spread, [like a virulent plague.]

(b). **How to Establish with Reasons a Dharmatā Other Than the Emptiness of Self, the Ground of Emptiness, Taught by Many Synonyms**

1'. **Actual Synonyms of the Ground of Emptiness**

a'. **Brief Teaching on the Ground of Emptiness, with Its Many Synonyms**

Therefore, those who wish to abandon all bad views, and to possess the perfect view of the pure and true should well resolve the difference between emptiness of self and emptiness of other, gaining non-erroneous ascertainment of them in order to see 1) the meaning of teachings taught with a hidden intention; 2) the great intention of the Buddha's teachings; and 3) the excellent reality of suchness.

As the victorious one Maitreya says **in his *Distinguishing the Middle and the Extremes*:**

Emptiness, to speak briefly, is synonymous

With suchness, and the true, pure ultimate,
The markless, the absolute, and dharmadhātu.

The respective meaning of these synonyms
Is not being other⁸⁰⁷ and so, not being erroneous,
Stopping those two,⁸⁰⁸ and experience of the noble ones,
And the cause of the qualities of a noble one.

The noble one Nāgārjuna says in his *Commentary on Bodhicitta*:

This **absolute bodhicitta**, mind of enlightenment
Has been explained as being emptiness,
Suchness, and the pure, true ultimate,
That without characteristics, and the absolute.

The excellent *First Buddha in Twelve Thousand Stanzas* says:

E, the secret realm of space, the bhaga
Or source of dharmas, and the lion throne....

The blessed Lord of the World, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, says:

Similarly, among the names E, the secret, the lotus, the source of
dharmas, the space of the dhātu, the realm of great bliss, the lion
throne, the bhaga, and the secret;⁸⁰⁹ E is not the sole principal
name, because they all produce understanding of emptiness
possessing the supreme of all aspects.

All aspects being complete in one thing is impossible for relative
phenomena, **and so they are not worthy of being absolute**. Emptiness
possessing the supreme of all aspects, synonymous with E, and so forth, is
absolute emptiness that cannot be relative emptiness.

b'. **Extensive Explanation Refuting the Assertion that Emptiness
of Self, the Absolute, and So Forth, are Synonyms**

1". **The Great Absurdities Entailed If Emptiness of Self and
Suchness Were Synonyms**

Objection: The emptiness taught to be synonymous with suchness is
emptiness of self, in which all phenomena are taught to be empty of their
own natures.

Answer: If so, those with perverse attachment, who are taught to have the
quality of never attaining nirvāṇa would exist as suchness, because they
are empty of their own natures. As suchness [is buddhahood], they would
also be buddhas. You should not think the connection between suchness
and buddhahood is not universal, because many pure scriptures, like the
following, teach that suchness is buddhahood.

The *Sūtra teaching the Great Compassion of the Tathāgata* says:

The meaning of suchness is the meaning of the Tathāgata.

The victorious one Maitreya says in his *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle*:

Suchness is maintained to be buddhahood.

The *Extensive Mother* says:

Subhūti, the meaning of the pure and true is buddhahood.

The commentary says:

The meaning of the pure and true is suchness, dharmakāya, which is buddhahood.

Vimalamitra's *Commentary on the Seven Hundred Stanza Perfection of Prajñā* says:

Dharmadhātu itself is the Blessed One.

In that text, he quotes a sūtra that says:

Dharmadhātu itself is enlightenment.

The exalted *Eight Thousand Stanza Perfection of Prajñā* says:

[Absolute] suchness has no coming or going.

That which is suchness is the Tathāgata.

That and very many other pure scriptures teach that suchness is the Buddha. If [suchness and emptiness of self] were synonyms, all incidental things that change into other things would be suchness, because they are empty of their own natures. If that is maintained, there would be the absurd consequence that things that change into other things never change into other things, because as Asaṅga says:

Why is suchness called suchness? It is because it does not change into anything else.

The victorious one Maitreya says suchness is, "Not other." Thus, his scriptures teach that the reality of suchness does not change into anything else.

Further, [if suchness and emptiness of self were synonyms,] even non-virtues would be suchness, because they are empty of themselves. If that is maintained, non-virtues would be virtues, absolute virtues, existent virtues, and uncompounded virtues, because they are suchness. That suchness is virtue, absolute virtue, existent virtue, and uncompounded virtue is taught again and again in the pure scriptures, so that [absurdity] too would be entailed.

On the contrary, changeable phenomena that are empty of themselves are not suchness. Suchness is emptiness, but it is [absolutely existent,] self-aware emptiness. It is not self-emptiness [that does not exist at all.]

2". **The Absurdity, If Emptiness of Self and the Pure and True**

Ultimate were Synonyms

Similarly, if “the pure and true ultimate” were synonymous with self-emptiness, all phenomena wrongly asserted to exist would be “the pure and true ultimate, because they are empty of themselves. Moreover, these assertions would be non-erroneous, because, as the victorious Maitreya says:

“The non-erroneous” means “the pure and true ultimate.

3". **The Absurdity, If the Dhātu Without Characteristics and Emptiness of Self were Synonyms**

Likewise, if the dhātu without characteristics and emptiness of self were synonyms, all self-empty [relative] things whose characteristics have not ceased would be the dhātu [of the truth of cessation] without characteristics. If so, their [relative] characteristics would have ceased, because, as the exalted Maitreya says, “They have ceased.” That is, he teaches the dhātu without [relative] characteristics as the ground in which all relative characteristics have ceased. Also, the noble one Asaṅga says:

Why is the markless so-called? Because its [relative] characteristics have completely ceased.”

4". **The Absurdity, If Emptiness of Self and Absolute Truth were Synonyms**

Likewise, if emptiness of self and absolute truth were synonyms, even the two obscurations of afflictive emotions and dualistic knowables would be absolute truth, because they are empty of themselves. If so, they could never be abandoned by any antidote at all. They would be experienced as self-experience of the absolute in the pristine wisdom of the noble ones. That is so, because the glorious protector Maitreya says [the absolute is] “Experienced by the noble ones,” and the noble one Asaṅga says:

Why is the absolute so-called? Because it is experienced in the noble ones’ absolute pristine wisdom.

5". **The Absurdity, If Emptiness of Self and True Dharmadhātu were Synonyms**

Likewise, if emptiness of self and absolute truth, [dharmadhātu,] are maintained to be synonyms, even unbearable, bad karma and afflictive emotions that are the causes of the lower realms would be dharmadhātu, because they are empty of themselves. If so, they would also be causes of the good qualities of a noble one, as the victorious Maitreya says:

Because dharmadhātu is the cause of the good qualities of a noble one.

The noble one Asaṅga says,

Why is dharmadhātu so-called? Because it causes all the good

qualities of Śrāvakas, Pratyekabuddhas, and buddhas.

6". **The Absurdity, If Emptiness of Self and Absolute Bodhicitta were Synonyms**

Further, the noble one Nāgārjuna asserts that absolute bodhicitta, enlightened mind, emptiness, and so forth, are synonyms. If his intention were self-emptiness, there would be the absurd consequence that even minds that harbor terrible evil deeds would be absolute enlightened mind, because they are empty of themselves.

7". **How Any Chance of Answers by Opponents that Eliminate Their Faults is Blocked**

Objection: We have no such faults, because, for these things like evil deeds that you mentioned above, the empty aspects are synonyms with absolute bodhicitta, dharmadhātu, and so forth; but the apparent aspects are not.

Answer: Are these apparent aspects empty or not empty? If they are empty, [according to you,] they are suchness, and so forth. Relative things that are not empty are impossible, *as the noble one Nāgārjuna says in his Commentary on Bodhicitta:*

The relative is explained as emptiness.
What is empty is just the relative.
Without the one, there is certainly not the other,
As with the produced and the impermanent.

Or *as the Heart Sūtra puts it:*

Form is emptiness, and emptiness is form.

The reasoning of such passages is that [false] appearance is emptiness, and emptiness is [false] appearance. Neither is something else than the other. *Maintaining the empty aspect of the relative to be absolute is simply illogical. Absolute appearance does not go beyond being [the non-empty] absolute, and the empty relative does not go beyond being [the empty] relative. [For the two truths of appearance and emptiness,] neither appearance nor emptiness can be understood to abide within both of the two truths.*

Similarly, [if suchness and emptiness of self were synonyms,] empty aspects of all that is not good would be synonyms of suchness. *Since suchness is goodness, all these empty qualities of non-goodness would be goodness. All [false] apparent aspects would have to be proclaimed as non-goodness, and all empty aspects as goodness. If so, [false] appearance⁸¹⁰ and emptiness could not be pervasive, equal, and inseparable.* Since a non-empty aspect of [false] appearance is impossible, apparent aspects of non-goodness, since they are empty of their own natures, would absurdly be suchness and goodness. This is so, because, as the noble one Asaṅga said:

What is absolute goodness? It is suchness.

8". **The Absurdity, If Self-Emptiness and the Bhaga of the Way Things Are were Synonymous**

When the many synonyms of emptiness, like “the ultimate bhaga **pervading space**,” are taught; the intention is [that they are synonyms of] the absolute ground of emptiness of other. The intention is not that these are synonyms of emptiness of self. If the latter were [the intention], terrible qualities of incidental defilements, in which the good qualities of omniscience are incomplete, [to say the least,] would be the ultimate bhaga that **pervades space, because they are empty of themselves**. They would be precious baskets complete with [all] the good qualities of mastery, and so forth.⁸¹¹ The *Mahāmudrā Drops Tantra* says:

Just as oil abides in sesame seeds,
And just as there is fire abiding in wood;
In that way, within all phenomena,
There abides the pure that is not seen.

Dharmadhātu has been called “the bhaga,”
Which is [exemplified as] a precious basket,⁸¹²
Is called the “bhaga” because it is endowed
With qualities⁸¹³ like those of mastery.
Such qualities are famed as those of the bhaga.
The dhātu is known and remembered as being mind.

Dharmatā, sugatagarbha, abiding within all phenomena, is [symbolically] known as “the bhaga.” You should know that it is also taught to be absolute bodhicitta. However, if the bhaga were synonymous with emptiness of self, even the greatest evil deeds of sentient beings, because they are empty of themselves, would absurdly have to be maintained to be the ultimate bhaga, replete with all its excellent qualities. As is said in Nāropa’s great commentary, the *Vajrapādasārasaṃgraha*:

Because it cuts off the desire of the desire realm,⁸¹⁴
And cuts off afflictive emotions, as others cannot do,
Therefore, it is called “the bhaga. ... ”

And, as the Kālacakra Root Tantra, the *Supreme First Buddha* teaches:

Mastery, excellent body,
Glory, fame, and wisdom,
And splendid diligence,
These six⁸¹⁵ are called “the bhaga.

The thirty-six pure⁸¹⁶ constituents,
Vajra consorts of earth, and so forth,⁸¹⁷
With the lords of their qualities,⁸¹⁸
These six are well-known as the bhaga.

Likewise, a citation from the *Hevajra Tantra* in Acalagarbha’s short summary, *Discourse on the Stainless Light* says:

Because afflictions are overcome by prajñā,
 Prajñā, likewise, has been called the bhaga.
 This subduer is well-known by the name the “bhaga,”
 As she overcomes the Māras and the afflictions.

Because she primordially and naturally conquers Māras and afflictive emotions, the goddess of the sixth perfection, Prajñāpāramitā, has been called “the bhaga.” Also, the glorious *Vajra Peak Tantra* calls the ground that has primordially overcome all opposing aspects “the bhaga.”:

That which overcomes all opposing aspects,
 Such as afflictive emotions, karma, and birth,⁸¹⁹
 And the two obscurations, afflictions and knowables,
 Is known as the “possessor of the bhaga.”⁸²⁰

The ground that naturally conquers opposing aspects to all that is desired is taught as the bhaga. Someone endowed with the bhaga is called a bhagavān [or bhagavatī.] The glorious *Hevajra Tantra* says:

This Buddha, who is one who is endowed with the bhaga,
 Has therefore been endowed with the name of “Bhagavān.”⁸²¹
 He is said to have six different kinds of bhaga,
 Including all qualities of mastery, and so forth,
 And vanquishing māras of the afflictions, and so forth.
 He is therefore endowed with the name of “Bhagavān.”

The naturally self-established qualities and [primordial] abandonment of defilements of buddhahood are said to be the bhaga. Also, the glorious *Vajra Garland Tantra* says:

Dharmadhātu is explained as the bhaga.
 Being the bhaga, it is the precious basket,
 Possessing qualities like those of mastery.
 That is why it has been called the bhaga.
 The bhaga, the dhātu of all phenomena
 Is taught to be the mind of enlightenment.⁸²²

That is, the bhaga is taught to be inseparable awareness and the space of the dhātu. It is enlightened mind in which all the phenomena that are the qualities of the absolute are complete. The *Tantra that Reveals the Intention* says:

That upon which all the buddhas attend,
 Which is the thirteenth [bodhisattva] level,⁸²³
 Is truly explained to be the vajra queen,⁸²⁴
 The absolute Dharma, also called “the bhaga.”

The ground endowed with twelve kinds of truth,⁸²⁵ the all-pervading thirteenth [level], the absolute Dharma of realization, the consort of all the buddhas is called the bhaga. Also, the glorious *Buddha Skull, or Bliss-guarding Kapāla Tantra*⁸²⁶ says:

The highest bliss-wisdom, as it is,
 Abides in the middle of the bhaga.
 Though the bestower of great bliss,
 Just that, abides in everything,⁸²⁷
 Foolish children do not know it.

These words say that the bestower and place of abiding of changeless supreme bliss, [dharma]dhātu, is called the bhaga. The glorious *Vajra Dākinī Tantra* says:

The lotus invoked as a cluster⁸²⁸
 Truly enters the bhaga,
 Which should be contemplated
 As the ocean of pristine wisdom.⁸²⁹

That is saying that the [fetal] lump of bliss-wisdom, drawn into [the oceanic dhātu] as the absolute [pure] lotus empty of other, is taught as the bhaga.⁸³⁰ Also, a citation in Candrakīrti's *Commentary of the Guhyasamāja Tantra, the Luminous Lamp*, says:

The well-purified mudrā consort,
 The well-purified bhaga lotus....

These words say that the consort of all the buddhas, Queen Mahāmudrā, is taught to be both the lotus and the bhaga. Also, a citation in Vajrapāṇi's *Commentary on Cakrasaṃvara* says:

By possessing the qualities⁸³¹ of mastery, and so forth,
 It is the bhaga, and also by overcoming māras.
 Because of having been endowed with that [very] bhaga,⁸³²
 One is called a blessed lord⁸³³ of the 'other' three realms.

Inseparable awareness and the space of the dhātu, in which the ultimate qualities of renunciation and realization are naturally complete, is taught to be the bhaga, pervading space. Also, the blessed Lord of the World, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, says:

"Bhagavān," can be translated "victorious one," because of primordially and naturally overcoming the māras and afflictive emotions; or as "blessed one" because of being blessed with possession of the assembly of qualities of omniscience, mastery, and so forth.

Since "Bhagavān," can be translated either as "victorious one" or "blessed one," it is acceptable, maybe better, to leave the term in Sanskrit. Also, the glorious king of tantras, the Kālacakra, [presents sugatagarbha as the bhaga, as follows:]⁸³⁴

There are the five vajra topics of the changeless, great emptiness, VAM, attached to which is E, the self-appearance of pristine wisdom. This is form where appearances of one and many are one in the single taste of dharmatā, as are equal and unequal, right and

left, front and back, above and below. From all those **come one, [sugatarbha,] that in itself is without** white and green, with **all the** various great colors **in one taste, and yet they are all displayed, as** are short ⁸³⁵– **body and sattva, spiritual power – and long, – speech and rdul, menstrual blood, rajas, emotional energy – and very long – mind, thamas, ignorance and solidity – “without these** qualities [in itself],” yet having **inseparable absolute qualities of the powers and fearlessnesses, and so forth.** Sugatarbha appears in the form of man and woman, yet also **its empty form is really** neither man nor woman.

To that which is the single support of all **bliss**, the excellent bhaga, the supreme bhaga **pervading space**, to you I bow, to you I bow.

The commentary says:

The “excellent bhaga” is the nature of the **immeasurable, absolute,** good qualities of mastery, and so forth. The “supreme bhaga” is **the ‘other’ three realms that are** supreme over the relative three realms. For that reason, heads are bowed to it.

The *Higher than High Explanatory Tantra* says:

Meditate in the center of the bhaga⁸³⁶
By joining the samayas of the three secrets.⁸³⁷

And:

In the bhaga **of great bliss**, Vajravārāhī,
Meditate on the **absolute** three secrets.

And:

The maṇḍala is explained to be the bhaga.

There are extremely many such passages in the Greater Madhyamaka teachings of the profound ultimate. The ground of emptiness, suchness, with [all] its naturally completely established, limitless qualities of dharmatā, **[the quality of] absolute** mastery, and so forth, is taught as the bhaga. It is also taught by very many other names like absolute deities, mantras, mudrās, tantras, maṇḍalas, jewels that are places of refuge, and so forth. Therefore, you should consult these extensive teachings.

9". **The Absurdity, If the Vajra of the Natural State and Emptiness of Self were Synonymous**

When vajra emptiness is taught in the completely pure, precious tantras, the intention is the absolute ground of emptiness of other, not emptiness of self. If emptiness of self could do the job of vajra emptiness, then wet, sloppy manure and essenceless dross, would be the vajra of the ultimate, as would all secretly foul, hollow, split, broken burnt, and destroyed things; as would filth, pits full of excrement, and all such repulsive substances. That is so, because they are empty of their own natures. Then these things

would also have to be maintained to be solid, not hollow, full of their essence, [rather than empty of it, and so forth.] The glorious *Vajra Peak Tantra* says:

This called “vajra, vajra,”
 Why is it said to be vajra?
 That which is characterized
 As hard, with no hollow core,
 Uncuttable, indivisible,
 Not burnable, indestructible,
 Is emptiness,⁸³⁸ said to be “vajra.”

Also:

True⁸³⁹ and fulfilling suchness
 Is both unborn and unceasing.
 Changeless suchness like that
 Is what is known as “vajra.”⁸⁴⁰

And:

Utterly changeless suchness,
 Immovable dharmadhātu,
 Such things are known as “vajra.”

And:

This wheel of six realms has its shortcomings,
 Yet is overcome by the **absolute** vajra.
Absolute bodhicitta⁸⁴¹ is that vajra,
 The conqueror of all afflictive emotions.⁸⁴²

And:

The suchness of all phenomena,
 Emptiness,⁸⁴³ is called “vajra.”⁸⁴⁴

Also, the glorious *Vajra Garland Tantra* says:

Not cut, not split, unchanging,
 Not burned, supremely piercing,
 The⁸⁴⁵ five supreme wisdoms of Buddha
 Are called the “vajra nature.”⁸⁴⁶

Also:

Peaceful, non-dual, and having no aspects at all⁸⁴⁷
 Nature that is the selfhood of everything,
 This is called “the great bliss **of the absolute**,”⁸⁴⁸
 Actuality of the five vajra wisdoms,
 The nature that is the selfhood of the⁸⁴⁹ five buddhas.

The Glorious *Secret of All Tantra* says:

In its natural luminosity,

Mind has been described as being “vajra.”

Also, the glorious *Kālacakra* says:

The vajras are the great indestructible kāyas of pristine wisdom. ...

Many other tantras like the glorious *Hevajra*, the *First Buddha*, and so forth, speak of “the indestructible vajra” that is innate, uncompounded pristine wisdom. Also, the noble one who is the Lord of the World, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, says:

“Vajra,” pervading space, refers to the inconceivable⁸⁵⁰ mind vajra, indestructible pristine wisdom. One in whom that [indestructible] wisdom exists is called a “vajra possessor.”

And:

Vajra is the great bliss and the great emptiness, primordially and naturally mixed in inseparable equal taste, in a way that is indestructible and uncuttable. Vajra as a vehicle is the Vajra Vehicle in which the goal is the path. The otherwise successive styles of the perfection of prajñā and mantra are primordially mixed there, as the single nature of ‘other’ cause and other effect. Just that is the great nirvāṇa.

Also:

The Vajra Vehicle is the vehicle of truly, completely enlightened buddhas. It is “vajra” because it is indestructible by the [lesser, conceptualized] vehicles of [theistic or materialistic] extremists, Śrāvakas, and Pratyekabuddhas. Because we can use it as a means to go to liberation, it is called the “Vajra Vehicle pervading space. ...”

Also, the *Vajraviḍāraṇa Tantra* says:

Uncuttable, indestructible, true, hard, stable, unobstructable by anything, ...

That refers to the space of the dhātu. Purely and truly hard and stable, it cannot be cut or destroyed by anything. This suchness without birth, cessation, or change; the luminous nature of enlightened mind pervading space; is the essence of the five buddhas and the five self-arising pristine wisdoms. Because of all that, it is called “vajra.” The *Expression of the Absolute names of Mañjuśrī* says:

Solitary, without the natures of other phenomena that are not included in dharmadhātu, it is hard and solid vajra selfhood, pervading space.

And:

Having the fearsome power of a vajra,⁸⁵¹
The illustrious vajra that is the vajra heart,

This is the great-bellied⁸⁵² vajra of illusion.⁸⁵³

And:

Born from a vajra,⁸⁵⁴ vajra self,⁸⁵⁵
Vajra essence, like space...⁸⁵⁶

And:

Greatly resounding vajra laughter,
The great being Vajrasattva,
Vajra king, great bliss,
Vajra wrath, great joy,
Vajra HŪM, resounding HŪM.

It wields a vajra arrow⁸⁵⁷ as a weapon,
Its vajra sword cuts through, without remainder.⁸⁵⁸
Vajra possessor, holder of all vajras,
Solitary vajra, dispelling war.⁸⁵⁹

Terrible eyes,⁸⁶⁰ blazing vajras,⁸⁶¹
Also, hair of blazing vajras,
Descending vajra, great descent,⁸⁶²
Hundred eyes, vajra eyes.⁸⁶³

Body possessing vajra hairs.
The only body has vajra hairs.
Nails growing with vajra tips.
Vajra essence, hardened skin.

Glorious with vajra māla,
Adorned with vajra ornaments.

And:

The six syllables, vajra sounds.

And:

Glorious vajra jewel empowerment.

And:

Lord of all vajra holders.

And:

Great shining of the vajra sun,
Immaculate light of the vajra moon.

And:

Sharp vajra, great sword.

And:

Great weapon, vajra Dharma.

Profound **victor of victors**.⁸⁶⁴
 This is vajra awareness⁸⁶⁵
 Of the way things are.

And:

Possessing all the vajra seats.⁸⁶⁶

These passages, and so forth – for absolute, solitary, hard, and solid self-arising wisdom, personified as a deity – describe its qualities of: power, fame, sound, laughter, illusions, heart, essence, self, bliss, joy, eyes, hair, body hairs, nails, skin, belly, seats, garlands, ornaments, arrow, sword and other weapons, empowerment, descent, understanding, glory, the sun and moon, and so forth.

All these aspects described as “vajra” are **omnipresent** aspects of **absolute** sugatagarbha that are ‘other’ **than the outer and inner relative**. **Saying that has no faults of contradiction.**

Likewise, from line seventy-two, the *Expression of the Absolute names of Mañjuśrī* describes as **all-pervading** “vajras” all of the following: vajra terrifying, accumulation, body,⁸⁶⁷ eyes, ears, nose, tongue, teeth, nails, hair, body hairs, ornaments, laughter, song, dance, weapons, and so forth.

The Lord of Secret, Vajrapāṇi, says:

The unity of dharmakāya and the kāya of coemergence is called Vajrasattva.

“Vajra” is dharmakāya, emptiness, and prajñā.

“Sattva” is the kāya of coemergence, compassion, and skillful means.

Thus, the nature, **pervading space** – in which the **absolute** qualities of prajñā, **emptiness**, and **dharmakāya** are purely and truly joined with those of **skillful means, compassion, and the kāya of coemergence** – is described as “Vajrasattva.”

There dharmakāya and the perfection of prajñā, **pervading space**, are taught as the vajra that is also emptiness, in the sense of the absolute ground of emptiness of other. We should be confident that vacuous, self-empty essencelessness is unworthy of being that vajra. Similarly, the *Tantra of Completely Purifying the Lower Realms* says:

Buddha before all the buddhas,⁸⁶⁸
 Overcoming all defilements
 of ignorance **from the beginning**,⁸⁶⁹
 Vajra, king holding a vajra,⁸⁷⁰
 Vajra, holding a vajra.⁸⁷¹
 Vajra body, great vajra body.
 Homage to Vajrapāṇi.
 Vajra limbs,⁸⁷² supreme vajra.
 Blazing vajra, greatly blazing.⁸⁷³

Vajra power,⁸⁷⁴ great power.
 Vajra weapon,⁸⁷⁵ great weapon.
 Vajra in hand, great hand.
 Vajra arrow, totally piercing.⁸⁷⁶
 Sharp vajra, so very sharp. ...⁸⁷⁷
 Chief of all, with the vajra nature.

These words about the ultimate teach as “vajras” all the deities of self-arising pristine wisdom that is inseparable awareness and the space of the dhātu. The *Embodiment of the Suchness of all the Tathāgatas* says:

Vajrasattva, great being,
 All **absolute** vajra tathāgatas,
 First vajra,⁸⁷⁸ total goodness,
 Homage to Vajrasattva.

 Vajra king, supreme buddha,⁸⁷⁹
 Vajra hook,⁸⁸⁰ tathāgata,
 True king, supreme vajra,
 Homage to you, vajra summoner.

 Vajra desire, great bliss,⁸⁸¹
 Vajra arrow, controlling,⁸⁸²
 Desire of Māra, great vajra.⁸⁸³
 Homage to you, vajra bow. ...⁸⁸⁴
 Vajra binding, Great seal. ...⁸⁸⁵

There it teaches as “vajra” all the deities of the powers and phenomena⁸⁸⁶ of the pure and true ultimate, sugatagarbha. [Likewise,] the glorious *Tantra of the Supreme First Buddha* says:

All body, speech, and mind is vajra. ...⁸⁸⁷

And:

Because of vajra hardness, complete enlightenment manifesting the great equality⁸⁸⁸ is the great enlightenment.⁸⁸⁹ There, and so forth, the body, speech, and mind of the great enlightenment are taught as “vajra.”

Also, the glorious *Vajra Peak Tantra* says:

Utterly stable vajradhātu is suchness,
 Pristine wisdom,⁸⁹⁰ manifesting as buddhahood.”

There, very stable dharmadhātu, absolute pristine wisdom **pervading space**, is taught to be buddhahood that is called [the indestructible] “vajra.”

Also, the *Supreme First Buddha* says:

Absolute great bliss that is the great vajra,⁸⁹¹
 Is excellently adorned with all the vajras.⁸⁹²

And:

The place of abiding of all the vajra holders,
Is the great vajra, great bliss of the changeless nature.

And:

Then the blessed one Vairocana, having found sugatagarbha, the secret dharmatā of all the tathāgatas, the lack of conceptualized complexity of all phenomena, spoke of this primordial, supreme glory, absolute sugatagarbha without beginning, middle, and end, perfection of prajñā, vajra dharmatā, the inseparable essence of ground and fruition, in which all phenomena have no conceptualized complexity [at all].⁸⁹³

This passage refers to dharmatā without complexity, the great bliss, the inseparable essence of ground and fruition, the perfection of prajñā, sugatagarbha, as “vajra.” The glorious *Stainless Light* says:

The victorious ones teach the changeless five topics of the great emptiness, the natures of thirty-six deities and tantras that are vajras pervading space. By grasping these, one is a vajra-holder.

That is, the thirty-six deities of the absolute six skandhas, and so forth that abide within inseparable awareness and the space of the dhātu, are called “vajra.” Similarly, the glorious secret assembly of all the buddhas, the *Guhyasamāja*, says:

The five vajra higher perceptions are those of the vajra eye, the vajra ear, vajra mind, vajra realm, and vajra miracle.

Candrakīrti says in his commentary, the *Luminous Lamp*:

“Vajra” refers to non-dual pristine wisdom. The holder of that essence is a vajra holder; that is, a holder of the ultimate.

That and many other tantras speak of the body, speech, mind, and pristine wisdom vajras, and so forth; vajra conceptualized perception, formations, and so forth; the vajra eye, vajra form and other vajra sense sources; Vajradhara, vajra amṛita, vajradhātu, Vajra HŪṃkāra, Vajra Bhairava, vajra lord, Vajra Ḍākinī, Vajra Peak, Vajra Four Seats, and other [deities and tantras]; vajra passion, anger, ignorance, jealousy, and so forth; vajra autumn, winter, and so forth; and Vajra Vehicle, vajra mantra, vajra yoga, Vajravārāhī, Vajra Tārā, Vajra Nairātmyā, and so forth.

As is taught in the *Chapter on Complete Purity*, in the *Perfection of Prajñā Sūtras*, all of these are synonymous with dharmatā, dharmadhātu, the true realm of phenomena, the faultlessness of phenomena, suchness, unerring suchness, suchness that is not other, the pure and true ultimate, the inconceivable dhātu, the unborn, the unceasing, primordial peace, natural, complete nirvāṇa, completely pure form, the form of dharmatā, form that transcends the three realms, the three times, and so forth.

Whether or not relative buddhas appear in the world, whether or not individual people understand and believe in them, and whether anyone's incidental defilements cease or not, these vajras always abide, pervading everywhere, like space.

10". **The Absurdity, If Mahāmudrā, the Way Things Are, were
Synonymous with Emptiness of Self**

If it is maintained that there is no profound emptiness except emptiness of self [that is non-existence,] then Mahāmudrā, the essence in which ground and fruition are inseparable, emptiness possessing the supreme of all aspects, and the Mother, Prajñāpāramitā would not exist either, since emptiness of self cannot fulfill their function. If it could, even bad things like poison and excrement would be all these [excellent] things, because they are empty of their own natures. This cannot [reasonably] be maintained. As [the emanation of the] blessed lord Avalokiteśvara, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka says:

I bow to Mahāmudrā,
Transcending the nature of atoms,⁸⁹⁴
Its nature like mirror divining,⁸⁹⁵
Possessing all supreme aspects.

And:

The **absolute ground** that **primordially and** completely overcomes the obscurations of the skandhas, and so forth, with objects like images invoked in the eight kinds of mirror divination, bestows solitary suchness, the great mudrā consort of vajra holders, and the bliss **of** omniscience.

And:

Mahāmudrā is the **absolute ground** without natures **of relative phenomena and without aspects of [relative] things**. However, it has the supreme of all aspects, the characteristics of all **absolute** phenomena. Mahāmudrā is the perfection of prajñā, the creatress of all the buddhas.

There, and so forth, this is extensively taught. Also, the king of tantras, the *Kālacakra*, says:

The mudrā seal **of mahāmudrā**, like magical illusions in mind and space, or like images **invoked by divination** in a pure, clean mirror, emanates many rays like flashes of immaculate lightning. These shine forth as⁸⁹⁶ the **absolute** three worlds. ...

Also, the *Vajra Tent of the Ḍākinīs* says:

As **pervasive as** the element of space,
Always abiding throughout the thousand-fold world realm,
The perfection of great bliss that is mahāmudrā
Is buddhahood abiding there, like space.⁸⁹⁷

The *Compendium of Principles* says:

The **absolute** Tathāgata, mahāmudrā....

And:

In the way of mahāmudrā,
Vajra-holders are **self**-established.⁸⁹⁸

The Lord of Secret, Vajrapāṇi, says:

Supreme siddhi, enlightenment, is mahāmudrā, the perfection of prajñā. It possesses the supreme of all aspects, **while also being** in itself **without all aspects of [relative] things**.

Also:

The siddhi maintained to be mahāmudrā consists of **four** omniscient **knowledges of the four all-pervading, naturally existing, absolute kāyas**: 1) knowledge of all aspects of [relative] phenomena, **nirmāṇakāya, pervasive like space**; 2) knowledge of the [fruition as the absolute] path, **sambhogakāya, pervasive like space**; 3) knowledge of all aspects of phenomena as that path, **dharmakāya pervasive like space**; and 4) the goddess who bestows the **absolute** ten powers, four fearlessnesses, and so forth, all the qualities of buddhahood, [the essence, svābhavikakāya.]

And:

To see inner reflections of all the buddhas of the **absolute** three realms is to see mahāmudrā.

And:

Primordially and naturally free from all obscurations, like an image in mirror divination, mahāmudrā, **primordially, naturally** adorned with spheres of light, [spontaneously] emits limitless clouds of light rays, **while in** itself she **is entirely without emanation and gathering**.

And:

The absolute ground empty of anything else is Vajrayoginī.
She is the [absolute] appearance of your own mind,
the naturally existing enlightened family,
the self-arising [splendor of] pristine wisdom,
mahāmudrā possessing the supreme of all aspects,
the perfection of prajñā,
emptiness that is not empty of itself,
suchness,
the lady possessing the families, and
the lotus.

Also, the glorious *Hevajra* says:

The bliss of the **male organ**⁸⁹⁹ is mahāmudrā.

The vajra sources⁹⁰⁰ are the totality.⁹⁰¹
 This secret union in meditative absorption
 Is not taught as external union of two.⁹⁰²

And:

The **absolute drop**⁹⁰³ of camphor is Nairātmyā.
 Absolute bliss has the way of selflessness.
 That bliss of the absolute is mahāmudrā,
 Abiding in the maṇḍala of the navel,
 With the nature of the first vowel **A**,
 Described by the buddhas as being **absolute** mind.⁹⁰⁴

And:

The blessed prajñā consort of **absolute** suchness
 Is not tall or short **in the relative sense**,
 Nor is she round or square **in the relative sense**,
 She is nirvāṇa beyond all smells and tastes,
 The producer of coemergent, absolute joy.
 The yogin **of great bliss** who is born from her⁹⁰⁵
 Is an “eater”⁹⁰⁶ **who assimilates** her bliss.
 Joined together⁹⁰⁷ these are mahāmudrā....

And:

Also, that⁹⁰⁸ is coemergent form.
 The yoginī of excellent great bliss,⁹⁰⁹
 That itself⁹¹⁰ is the circle of the maṇḍala,
 Having the nature of the five pristine wisdoms.
 Its forms are those of the mirror-like pristine wisdom,
 Whose real things are equality pristine wisdom,
 The truth⁹¹¹ of which is discriminating wisdom.
 All that is the wisdom of persistent action,⁹¹²
 Of dharmadhātu that is completely pure.⁹¹³
 That is myself, the lord of the maṇḍala.⁹¹⁴
 And also, the yoginī of selflessness,
 Having the nature of non-dual dharmadhātu.

And:

The siddhi characterized as indestructible,⁹¹⁵
 Is accomplished by a yogin of the mudrā.⁹¹⁶

Also, the great paṇḍit lord Nāropa says:

I offer homage with complete devotion
 To that whose **absolute** essence is to be realized
 By examples of illusion, and so forth,
Great bliss and emptiness, mahāmudrā itself

Also:

That to be attained is mahāmudrā.

There, and so forth, dharmadhātu and pristine wisdom, inseparably one, are taught to be the nature that is mahāmudrā, absolute emptiness of other possessing the supreme of all aspects. [This is exemplified by] the bola's bliss of ultimate definitive meaning, the goddess Nairātmyā, the goddess Prajñāpāramitā, the syllable A, the lotus, emptiness, suchness, Vajrayoginī, the Lady Possessing [the naturally existing enlightened] Family, and so forth.

Because this profound emptiness is not empty of itself, these especially exalted sources exemplify the reality of ultimate mahāmudrā, inseparable ground and fruition as the great mother or consort, Nairātmyā, the syllable A, the lotus, innate kāya or joy, the maṇḍala circle, the five pristine wisdoms, suchness, Vajrayoginī, the Lady Possessing the Family, and so forth.

All these are taught with the intention of the non-empty ground that is empty of all relative phenomena, dharmatā, absolute truth, sugatagarbha with its nature of limitless inseparable qualities, buddha nature, suchness, the pure self, emptiness that is the [truly existent] essence of non-things, emptiness of other things, non-empty emptiness, unborn emptiness, omnipresent emptiness, emptiness that is not non-affirmingly negated, emptiness unrelated to the relative, emptiness having the supreme of all aspects, and self-aware pristine wisdom.

If these topics are seen like that, the pure and true meaning of the great intention is seen. Otherwise, [as self-emptiness,] the style of emptiness will not accord with the intention of Vajradhara for the Mahāmudrā consort in which ground and fruition are inseparable, the Greater Madhyamaka, innate union, the yoga of innermost union, the unity of buddhahood, Cakrasaṃvara, Hevajra, Guhyasamāja, Nairātmyā, Vajravārāhī, and so forth.

11". **The Absurdity, If the Secret of the Way Things Are, the Great Secret, and So Forth, were Synonymous with Emptiness of Self**

Synonyms of ultimate emptiness taught by glorious great Vajradhara in the precious tantras, "secret," great secret," and so forth, are taught with the intention of the kind of emptiness that is the essence of non-things, the absolute ground empty of other. The intention is not mere emptiness of non-things, emptiness of self, empty emptiness, nihilistic emptiness, emptiness of arising, non-omnipresent emptiness, emptiness of non-affirming negation, emptiness correlated with the relative alone, and materialistic nothingness.

These are not suitable synonyms of "the secret," and so forth. If "the secret" were synonymous with self-emptiness, even the five self-perpetuating skandhas, would be the "secret" that is the ultimate definitive

meaning, because they are empty of themselves. It would absurdly follow that the five skandhas are the perfection of prajñā, because the Lord of Secret, Vajrapāṇi, says:

“The secret” refers provisionally to the bhaga of a karmamudrā consort. Definitively, it refers to the perfection of prajñā, emptiness
as the inseparable essence of ground and fruition.

“The secret” is taught as “the perfection of prajñā, emptiness that is the inseparable essence of the ground and fruition.” That is not because it is empty of itself, but because it is the non-empty absolute that is empty of other, emptiness existing as the essence of non-things. That kind of emptiness is both the perfection of prajñā and dharmatā.

As synonyms of this ultimate profound emptiness in which ground and fruition are inseparable, Vajrapāṇi speaks of the [secret] dākinī, the nature of all, the secret, the great secret, and so forth:

The secret dākinī in the great secret realm
Eternally abiding as the nature of all.⁹¹⁷

The glorious *Lesser Tantra of Cakrasaṃvara* teaches:

Supremely rejoicing and the great secret,” pervading space,”
Always abiding as the nature of all phenomena,⁹¹⁸

The absolute ground of emptiness of other and the rest of the synonyms listed above all refer to the [existent] emptiness that is the essence of non-things, and emptiness of things other than itself.

12". **The Absurdity, If the Triangle of the Natural State, the Source of Dharmas, and So Forth, were Synonyms of Emptiness of Self**

Further, many synonyms of emptiness are taught by Vajradhara: the ultimate source of dharmas, in which ground and fruition are inseparable, the triangle, the syllable E, vajra play, the consort’s bhaga,⁹¹⁹ the perfection of prajñā, sugatagarbha, and so forth.

These all have the intention of the absolute ground that is empty of other. They are not synonymous with emptiness of self and its many synonyms listed above. If they were, even the five evil deeds with immediate retribution would be the source of dharmas, the triangle, and so forth, because they are empty of their own essence. It would absurdly follow that [unspeakable] evil deeds are the joy of the maṇḍala, and so forth that are relied on by all the buddhas. As the glorious *Pure, True Union Tantra* says:

This completely pure triangle
Relied on by all the buddhas,
Adorned by VAM⁹²⁰ at the center,
With the syllable E⁹²¹ as clothing,
As the joyous maṇḍala triangle,

Is called the vajra play,⁹²²
 And also, the consort's bhaga,⁹²³
 As well as the source of dharmas.

Also:

The root of all the tantras,⁹²⁴
 In the form⁹²⁵ of a vast triangle,
 Is common to all living beings,⁹²⁶
 Jealous gods, gods like Bhramā, and so on,
 As their true place of residing,
 the wisdom ground of all.

And:

That itself⁹²⁷ abides as perfection of prajñā.
 That, transcending the objects of consciousness,
 Dwells within the hearts of all living beings....⁹²⁸

The *Vajra Tent of the Ḍākinī Tantra* says:

Blissful⁹²⁹ and a pure triangle,
 Not dusty, and free from faults,⁹³⁰
 Free from dust, conquering evil,⁹³¹
 Nature that makes no waves,⁹³²
 True, ultimate bliss and its knower,⁹³³
 Supreme secret and secret rejoicing. ...

[These points are made,] because there and elsewhere the triangular source of dharmas, and so forth, are taught to have the innately self-existing nature of all the many qualities of renunciation and realization. Similarly, the blessed, greatly compassionate one, [the emanation of] lord Avalokiteśvara, [Kalkī Puṇḍarīka,] says:

"Source of dharmas, meaning absolute, great emptiness, is the source of absolute phenomena that have no relative natures. From that, all phenomena of the absolute ground arise. "Dharmas without relative natures, ... phenomena of the absolute ground ..." refers to the eighty-four thousand heaps of qualities like the ten powers and four fearlessnesses of the fundamental nature, the absolute all ground of pristine wisdom. Their source, which is said without contradiction to be inseparable from them, is the source of dharmas, the absolute buddha field.

And:

Therefore, the source of dharmas, pervading space as the nature of dharmadhātu, is the consort of variety, Viśvamātā, embraced by Kālacakra. [Their union is] always primordially and naturally free from obscurations. Therefore, the individual who attains it is necessarily free from incidental defilements.

To understand that, the divisions of the two truths must be known. The heaps of absolute qualities, the ten powers, and so forth, are [forever] inseparable from the source of dharmas itself. They are said without faults of contradiction “to arise [primordially] without arising.” The meaning should be understood from the instructions. Likewise, the Lord of Secret, Vajrapāṇi, says:

Regarding “abiding in the supreme great secret,” the great secret is the source of dharmas, the ‘other’ space element. “Abiding” in [the source of dharmas] is abiding in the great secret. ...

Also, Vajrapāṇi’s *Commentary on Cakrasaṃvara* says:

E, the bhaga, the lotus,
Purity,⁹³⁴ bliss realm, and blissful,⁹³⁵
Lion throne and objectless,⁹³⁶
Suchness and perfection.⁹³⁷

Similarly, the *Vajra Tent of the Dākinīs* says:

The Blessed One spoke these words saying:
Pure,⁹³⁸ immaterial, dhātu of ‘other’ space,
Accommodating⁹³⁹ and very luminous,
This is the realm⁹⁴⁰ and ground⁹⁴¹ of the various vajras,⁹⁴²
Dhātu of all **dharmas** and beautiful,...⁹⁴³
That is rejoicing in the great highest secret
And always abiding as the nature of all.

Those words teach **the realm of absolute great bliss** by a variety of many different names that are taught as synonyms of the absolute ground of emptiness: the dustless **pervading space**, the immaculate free from dust, the faultless, conquest of evil deeds, the waveless, bliss of the ultimate, self-awareness of that, the supreme secret, the blissful, the place of bliss, the completely pure nature, rejoicing, **compassion** without reference point, **pervading space**, the **absolute** dhātu of space, **immaterial** emptiness, **pervading space**, purity from the relative phenomena of the three realms, accommodating, **that is, not obstructing the three realms pervading space**, very luminous **light**, the various vajras, the place of qualities, the ground, the dhātu **of all qualities**, and the beautiful dhāraṇī consort **who is the fundamental way things are pervading space**.

It is said that the ultimate nature does not arise from causes and conditions, **but independently and naturally**. It is unfabricated, **independent, and naturally produced**, without depending on others. The noble one Nāgārjuna says in his *Root Verses on the Middle Way*:

It is not logical that the ultimate nature
Would arise from a cause and from conditions.
A nature that arose from cause and conditions
Would [have to] be a nature that was produced.

How could it ever be appropriate

For the [ultimate] nature to be produced?
 And so, the pure nature is not fabricated.⁹⁴⁴
 And, **independent**, it does not depend on others.

The absolute is established as not being causally related at all with [relative] phenomena other [than itself]. Some say that means that the absolute is not causally dependent [for its existence] on other phenomena. That is an interpretation of those who do not understand the meaning of self-arising pristine wisdom.

13". **Teaching that Many Other Synonyms of the Absolute [have a Meaning] Other than Emptiness of Self**

a". **Teaching That Synonyms of the Absolute in Āryadeva's [have a Meaning] Other than Emptiness of Self**

Similarly, the master Āryadeva says in his *Compendium that is a Lamp for Practice*:

Absolute truth, not created at all by causes and conditions, is equal to space **in its vastness**. It is **naturally** undefiled svābhavikākāya. Illustrating this point, the *Sūtra Teaching the Single Way* says:

This Dharma is absent in teachings,
 Taught verbally through language,⁹⁴⁵
 Producing entry into
 the actual, single way
of all the many aspects
 of the essence dharmatā,
 It contacts the supreme,
 unsurpassable acceptance.

And:

The form of the essence of the body of supreme joy, with the nature of form arising **as absolute**, is called "great Vajradhara **pervading space**." Naturally liberated from the bondage of saṃsāra, it is also called "**the supreme city of the great** liberation, pervading space."

...

And:

What cannot be destroyed also cannot arise.
 What cannot arise is said to be indestructible.
 What cannot be destroyed⁹⁴⁶ is **natural**, lucid clarity.
 What is **natural** clarity is also **natural** purity.
 What is **natural** purity is without defilements.⁹⁴⁷
 What is undefiled is **natural** luminosity.⁹⁴⁸
 What is luminous is the [absolute] nature of mind....⁹⁴⁹

The [same text's] *Chapter on Cutting off the Collection of Doubts about Absolute Truth* says:

Now, to cut off the confusions of those attached to names, some synonyms of the absolute will be listed:

First there is **natural** luminosity, **natural** lucid clarity,
 then the **ground** empty of all **phenomena**,
 the pristine wisdom of **absolute** buddhahood,
 the pristine wisdom of the vajras of the **absolute**,
the pristine wisdom of the unsurpassable **absolute**,
primordial absence of all defilements,
 the **ground of** unreal things,
 that without appearance **of consciousness**,
 the **ground of** the selfless,
 that transcending **the two kinds** of self,
the ground empty of sentient beings **of the relative**,
 the **ground** empty of the life **of the relative**,
 the **ground** empty of the individual **of the relative**,
 the **ground** without covering **by defilements**,
 the **ground** without **the** arising **of the relative**,
 the **ground** without cessation,
 the **ground** without **the** letters **of the relative**,
 the **ground** without **the** words **of the relative**,
compassion without reference point,
 the unsurpassable **supreme**,
 the inexpressible,
 the inconceivable **supreme**,
 the limitless great qualities **that are supreme**,
the one taste of countless **qualities and aspects**,
 that transcending the sense powers **of consciousness**,
 that without place, **through having no causal relationships to**
any phenomena,
the ground without [relative] characteristics **and real things**,
the ground without characteristics,⁹⁵⁰
 the uncompounded **ground**,
 the motionless **ground**,
the ground without reference point,
 that completely unknown **by conscious, that is not**
consciousness,
 that unexamined **by logic**,
 the **completely** inexhaustible,
 that without **relative** words, **or**
that unteachable by words,
 the **naturally** unobscured **ground**,
 that which, **with many aspects**, having one style,
 peacefulness,
 that **whose objects and time are vast, like space**,
 the naturally pure, **pervading space**,
 the beginningless **ground**,
 the centerless **ground**,
 the endless **ground**,

the **ground** without going,
 the **ground** without coming,
 that which is **not at all** far away,
 that which is **not at all near**,
 that which is not one **aspect**,
 that which is not different **essences**,
 that which is hard to encounter **by consciousness**,
 that which is hard to meditate on **by consciousness**,
natural meditation itself,
 the pure and true **reality pervading space**,
 dharmakāya,
 the pure and true ultimate,
 the desireless ultimate,
 dharmadhātu,
 the bodiless **that pervades all bodies, like space**,
 that without dust, **that is free from the dust of defilements**,
 the **ground** free from **all** extremes,
 the **primordially, naturally, independently** established,
 the **naturally** established secret,
 the completely pure perfections **of generosity, and so forth**,
 the completely pure view,
 the completely pure **‘other’ cause, the great emptiness**,
 the completely pure, **‘other’ fruition, the great bliss**,
 the completely pure three realms, **or the three realms of**
complete purity,
primordially, naturally, completely pure merit, **pervading**
space,
primordially, naturally, completely pure evil deeds,
primordially, naturally, completely pure afflictive emotions,
primordially, naturally, completely pure karma,
primordially, naturally, completely pure rebirth,
 the perfection of prajñā,
 the mother of all the buddhas,
the essence of omniscience,
 the omniscience of the path, **dharmakāya**,
 omniscience of all phenomena, **absolute nirmāṇakāya**,
knowledge of the absolute three kāyas, pervading space,
 suchness,
 unerring suchness,
 equality,
 the naturally **self-existing**,
 inexhaustible accumulations of merit and pristine wisdom,
 the descent of pristine wisdom or **vajra descent**,
 the producer of all the **absolute** bodhisattvas,
 the mother of all absolute Śrāvakas,
 the producer of all Pratyekabuddhas,
 the giver of all worlds,
 the producer of the completely pure,
 divine eye of **relative noble ones that is the ground of worldly**

birth,
 the bestower of the divine ear,
 the producer of knowledge of others' minds,
 the producer of memory of previous lives,
 the producer of immeasurable miracles, and
 the exhauster of all afflictive emotions.

For the five higher perceptions too the divisions of the two truths must be known. The five absolute higher perceptions are of one taste with the absolute. They are the ground of the relative higher perceptions that depend on them.

And:

You should become familiar with the following names that are listed as synonyms of this completely perfect body, the kāya of union, **that unites skillful means and prajñā**:

Form of a person with great insight **into the absolute**,
 abiding in the way of the two truths, **with absolute essence and relative phenomena**,
 having a naturally luminous nature,
 having the nature of **absolute** skillful means and prajñā,
 having the nature of the **absolute** three realms,
 having the nature of the three **absolute** vehicles, **pervading space**,
 having the nature of the absolute three maṇḍalas,
 having the nature of skillful means, and likewise
 the **absolute** holy person,
 the **absolute** supreme person,
 the **absolute** great person,
 the **absolute** all-knowing person,
 the **absolute** heroic person,
 the **absolute** stable person,
 the **absolute** tamed person,
 the **absolute** taming person,
 the **absolute** supreme **or holy** person,
 the **absolute** guiding person,
 the **absolute** lion-like person,
 the **absolute** 'other' person
 the **absolute**, person of supreme space,
 having the nature of all **absolute** persons,
 having the nature of the **absolute** "pure person," and likewise
primordially and naturally surpassing saṃsāra,
primordially and naturally going to dry land,⁹⁵¹
primordially and naturally attaining bliss,
primordially and naturally attaining fearlessness,
 by **primordially and naturally** going to the other shore, blazing
 with brilliant splendor,
primordially and naturally removing the thorn [in the lion's

pawl,
primordially and naturally being without conceptual
 proliferation,
absolute monk,
absolute arhat,
 the ground in which contaminations are **primordially and**
naturally exhausted,
 the ground without any **afflictive emotions**,
 the **absolute** practitioner of virtue,
 the **absolute** brahmin,
 the **absolute** kṣatriya,
 the **absolute** buddha children,
 the ground **primordially and naturally** free from afflictive
 emotions,
 the **self**-empowered,
 the **independent**,
primordially and naturally liberated mind,
primordially and naturally liberated prajñā,
 the knower of all **knowables**,
supreme elephant,
primordially and naturally doing what needs to be done,
primordially and naturally performing actions,
primordially and naturally laying down the burden,
primordially and naturally attaining all goals,
primordially and naturally exhausting relationship with
 saṃsāra,
primordially and naturally liberating mind, through the Word
 of the pure and true,
primordially and naturally attaining power over all minds,
primordially and naturally being supremely perfect,
primordially and naturally abiding on the ultimate other shore
 that **pervades space**,
 the primordial, natural pristine wisdom kāya, **and**
 the **primordially and naturally** self-arisen.⁹⁵²

Where are all these listed? In scriptures of the unsurpassable, ultimate, definitive meaning like *Expressing the Absolute names of Mañjuśrī*.

b". **Teaching that Synonyms of the Absolute in [have a Meaning] Other than Emptiness of Self**

1:. **Teachings of This Through the Request and Response**

In that text there are also the following **synonyms of the absolute ground of emptiness of other**:

Glorious, **śrī**,
 Vajradhara, **united with everything**,
 supremely taming what is difficult to tame, **the winds and mind**,
 supreme hero **who cuts off all living beings**,

the one who is **primordially and naturally** victorious over the three
 realms,
 the vajra lord,
 the king of the secret,
 blossoming, white, lotus eye, **that sees everything**,
 blossoming lotus face **of everything**,
 vajra **held** in the hand,
 pervasive, **supreme** lord,
supreme guru of transmigrating beings,
supreme teacher of transmigrating beings,
supreme, great samaya,
supreme knower of suchness,
 supreme lord who is the knower of thoughts,
supreme pristine wisdom kāya,
 great, **supreme** uṣṇīṣa,
 supreme lord of words,
 self-arising pristine wisdom,
omnipresent Mañjuśrī,
omnipresent wisdom being,⁹⁵³
 supreme, vast, and profound meaning,
 supreme, great meaning,
 unequaled supreme,
primordially, naturally, utterly peaceful supreme,
 the supreme that is eternally virtuous, **in the beginning, middle, and**
end,
 the **supreme**, great continuity,
 the **supreme** net of miracles,
 supreme mantra holder,⁹⁵⁴
 perfect buddha, supreme among those with two legs,
 Mañjuśrī having a body of pristine wisdom.

2:. **Synonyms Taught on the Occasion of Perceiving the Six Families of Mantra**

And:

The great families of all secret mantra,
 supreme ones of secret mantra,
 supreme, **absolute** awareness holders,
 the three naturally-existing families,
 the worldly and world-transcending families,
 the great families that **pervade space and** illuminate the world,
 the supreme families of mahāmudrā,
 the great families of the uṣṇīṣa.

The divisions of the families of mantra were explained above.

3:. **Teachings of Enlightenment by the Net of Miracle**

And:⁹⁵⁵

The six mind-protecting kings of mantra,
 non-dual arising,
 unborn phenomena,
 inexpressible A Ā I Ī U Ū E AI O AU AM AḤ **STHI TO TRI TI DZĀNA**
MUTRI, and so forth,
 the kāya of pristine wisdom, abiding at the heart,
 buddha I or self,
 buddha entering into the three times,
 OM,
 sharp vajra,
 cutter of suffering,
 prajñājñānakāya⁹⁵⁶
 accumulation of pristine wisdom,
 kāya of pristine wisdom
 lord of speech,
 ARAPATSANA,⁹⁵⁷

4.: **Synonyms of the Absolute as the Great Vajradhātu Maṇḍala**

And:

buddha arisen from **absolute** A,
 the syllable A,
 great, holy, changeless meaning⁹⁵⁸
 great life of dharmatā,⁹⁵⁹
 the unborn **ground**,
 the inexpressible **ground, and not contradicting that**,
 the supreme cause of all expressions of dharmatā, and
 all the words of luminosity,
 the great offering **that is dharmatā**,
 the great passion **that is dharmatā**,
 the great anger **that is dharmatā**,
 the great stupidity **of dharmatā**,
 the great wrath **of dharmatā**,
 the great, passionate attachment **of dharmatā**,
 primordially **and naturally** conquering all the afflictive emotions,
 the great desire **of dharmatā**,
 the great bliss **of dharmatā**,
 the great joy **of dharmatā**,
 the great rejoicing **of dharmatā**,
 the great form **of dharmatā**,
 the great body **of dharmatā**,
 the great colors **of dharmatā**,
 the great body size **of dharmatā**,
 the great name **of dharmatā**,
 the great vastness **of dharmatā**,
 the great desire **of dharmatā**,
 the great, vast maṇḍala **of dharmatā**,
 the supreme, great prajñā **of dharmatā**,
 the supreme weapon-holder **of dharmatā**,

the great afflictive emotions of dharmatā,
 the supreme iron hook of dharmatā pervading space,
 the great fame of dharmatā,
 the great renown of dharmatā,
 the great illumination of dharmatā,
 the great luminosity of pristine wisdom,
 the great competence of dharmatā,
 the great knowledge of dharmatā,
 holder of the great miracle of dharmatā,
 accomplisher of the purposes of the great miracle of dharmatā,
 feeling joyful with the joy of the great miracle of dharmatā,
 possessing the illusory display of the great miracle of dharmatā,
 the great lord of generosity of dharmatā,
 supreme principal one of dharmatā,
 supreme, great discipline holder of dharmatā,
 supreme, great patience holder of dharmatā,
 supreme, great stability of dharmatā,
 supreme, great exertion of dharmatā,
 supreme, great overcomer of others that is dharmatā,
 supreme, great meditation that is dharmatā,
 abiding in the supreme meditative absorption that is dharmatā,
 holding the body of the great prajñā of dharmatā,
 great power of dharmatā,
 great skill in means of dharmatā,
 ocean of aspirations of dharmatā,
 ocean of pristine wisdom of dharmatā,
 great lovingkindness of dharmatā,
 great, immeasurable nature of dharmatā,
 great, supreme compassion of dharmatā,
 supreme understanding of dharmatā,
 great, supreme prajñā of dharmatā,
 supreme possession of understanding of dharmatā,
 supreme skillful means of dharmatā,
 supreme, great actions of dharmatā,
 supreme, great miracles of dharmatā,
 supreme possession of power of dharmatā,
 supreme possession of strength of dharmatā,
 supreme possession of swiftness of dharmatā,
 supreme, great miracle of dharmatā,
 supreme, great fame of dharmatā,
 supreme, natural conquest, of the mountain of saṃsāra
 supreme hardness of suchness,
 supreme holder of the great vajra,
 supreme, great wrath of dharmatā,
 supreme, great fury of dharmatā,
 terrifier of even the great terrifier that pervades space, the winds,
 and the all ground consciousness,⁹⁶⁰
 supreme, great protector of dharmatā,
 supreme, great insight of dharmatā,

supreme, great guru of dharmatā,
 supreme, great secret mantra of dharmatā,
 supreme, great stability of the Great Vehicle of dharmatā,
 supreme, great abiding in the manner of the Great Vehicle of dharmatā,
 supreme manner of the Great Vehicle of dharmatā.

5.: **Synonyms Teaching the Pristine Wisdom of the Dharmadhātu**

And:

Great buddha of dharmatā,
 great Vairocana of dharmatā,
 great, supreme sage of dharmatā,
 great, supreme sagacity of dharmatā,
 arising from the great manner of secret mantra of dharmatā,
 nature of the great manner of secret mantra of dharmatā,
 self of the great manner of secret mantra of dharmatā,
 supreme attainment of the ten perfections of dharmatā,
 supreme abiding in the ten perfections of dharmatā,
 supreme purity of the ten perfections of dharmatā,
 supreme manner of the ten perfections of dharmatā,
 supreme protecting lord of the ten perfections of dharmatā,
 supreme abiding on the ten [bodhisattva] levels, of dharmatā,
 self of the ten pure awarenesses of dharmatā,
 holder of the ten pure awarenesses of dharmatā,
 meaning of the ten goals that are the ten aspects of dharmatā,
 universal lord of lords of sages of dharmatā,
 universal lord of the ten powers of dharmatā,
 producer of all goals, without remainder of dharmatā,
 great controller of the ten aspects of dharmatā,
 beginningless self that is dharmatā,
 self without proliferations
 self of suchness,
 primordially pure self,
 supremely true speech of dharmatā,
 supremely changeless speech of dharmatā,
 supreme doing what is said of dharmatā,
 supreme non-duality of dharmatā,
 supreme teacher of the non-duality of dharmatā,
 abiding in the pure and true ultimate that is dharmatā,
 supremely uttering the sound of selflessness
 excellent terrifier of evil extremists,
 supreme omnipresence of dharmatā,
 supreme realm, possessing the goal of dharmatā,
 supreme power, possessing the goal of dharmatā,
 tathāgata of dharmatā,
 supreme, swift wish-fulfillment of dharmatā, pervading space,
 supreme victorious one of dharmatā,
 supreme, natural victory over enemies of dharmatā,

supreme, complete victory of dharmatā,
 supremely universal monarch of dharmatā,
 supremely powerful one of dharmatā,
 supreme study master of the Saṅgha community of dharmatā,
 supreme principal one of the Saṅgha community of dharmatā,
 supreme lord of the Saṅgha community of dharmatā,
 supreme master of the Saṅgha community of dharmatā,
 supremely powerful one of the Saṅgha community of dharmatā,
 supreme, great power of dharmatā,
 supremely cherishing dharmatā,
 supreme, great way of dharmatā,
 supreme non-reliance on others,
 supreme lord of words of dharmatā,
 supreme master of words of dharmatā,
 supreme, skillful speech of dharmatā,
 supreme mastery of words of dharmatā,
 supreme, limitless words of dharmatā,
 supreme, true words of dharmatā,
 supreme speaker of truth of dharmatā,
 supreme teacher of the four noble truths of dharmatā,
 supreme, irreversible dharmatā,
 supreme leader of dharmatā,
 supreme Pratyekabuddha of dharmatā,
 supreme rhinoceros-like Pratyekabuddha of dharmatā,
 Supreme, primordial renunciate, having various kinds of
 renunciation,⁹⁶¹
 great arising of dharmatā,
 great existence of dharmatā,
 great truth of dharmatā,
 great pure and true of dharmatā,
 cause of all,
 source of all,
 single place of all,
 supreme monk of dharmatā,
 supreme arhat of dharmatā,
 supreme exhauster of contamination, dharmatā,
 supreme ground free from passionate attachment,
 supreme tamer of the senses, dharmatā,
 supreme gainer of bliss of dharmatā,
 supreme attainer of fearlessness,
 supreme coolness, dharmatā,
 supreme, unsullied, and untainted dharmatā,
 possessing the supreme awareness and legs [of miracle] of
 dharmatā,
 going to bliss of dharmatā,
 abiding in bliss of dharmatā,
 realizing the bliss of dharmatā,
 supreme knowledge of the world through the two truths,
 the ground of pristine wisdom that is not a grasper of "I" as a self,

abiding in the manner of the inseparable two truths,
 primordially gone to the end of saṃsāra,
 having primordially done what must be done
 primordially dwelling on dry land,⁹⁶²
 solitary pristine wisdom,
 supreme clearing away of what is to be abandoned,
 supreme deliverance from what is to be abandoned,
 supreme conquest of what is to be conquered by the weapon of
 prajñā,
 supreme, holy Dharma,
 supreme Dharma king, **dharmatā**,
 Supreme clarification **of dharmatā**,
 Supreme illumination **of dharmatā**,
 supreme world-illumination **of dharmatā**,
 lord of Dharma **that is dharmatā**,
 Dharma king **that is dharmatā**,
 teacher of the good path,
 teacher of the supreme path,
 supreme establishment of goals **that is dharmatā**,
 supreme establishment of wishes **that is dharmatā**,
 primordially and naturally abandoning all conceptualization,
 dhātu of complete⁹⁶³ non-thought,
 supreme, inexhaustible **dharmatā**,
 holy dharmadhātu,
 the supremely inexhaustible,
 naturally possessing merit,
 primordially accumulating merit,
 primordially self-arising pristine wisdom, **pervading space**,
 the great source of the pristine wisdom, **dharmatā**,
 supreme possession of the pristine wisdom **of dharmatā**,
 supreme knowing of existent **dharmatā** as existent and the non-
 existent, **phenomena**, as non-existent,
 primordially and naturally gathering the two accumulations,
 supreme permanence **of dharmatā** that transcends the
 instantaneous,
 supreme victory **of dharmatā** over the side that does not correspond
 with it,
 primordially possessing the yogic union **of dharmatā**,
 primordial, supreme meditation of dharmatā,
 supreme objects of contemplation of dharmatā,
 supreme intelligence **of dharmatā**,
 supreme self **of dharmatā**,
 supreme discrimination **of dharmatā**,
 supremely motionless **dharmatā**,
 first, supreme svābhavikakāya,
 the holder of the remaining three kāyas **of the absolute**,
 self of the five buddha bodies **of dharmatā**,
 all-pervading self,
 self of the five pristine wisdoms,

crown of selfhood of the five buddhas,
 buddha child of dharmatā,
 absolute,
 'other,'
 beyond,
 supreme,
 supreme prajñā of dharmatā,
 dharmatā that has primordially come forth from saṃsāra,
 dharmatā that is without birthplace
 dharmatā that is the supreme birthplace,
 naturally coming forth from phenomena,
 supreme birthplace of phenomena,
 primordial illuminator of saṃsāra,
 primordial destroyer of saṃsāra,
 matchless, single self,
 hard, solid, completely indestructible self,
 vajra self,
 lord of dharmatā who is always just produced, never ages, and
 never goes away, pervading space,
 supremely self-arisen from space of dharmatā,
 self-arising pristine wisdom,
 great fire of prajñā, the pristine wisdom of dharmatā,
 great light of prajñā, the pristine wisdom of dharmatā,
 producer of phenomenal appearance of prajñā, the pristine wisdom
 of dharmatā,
 lucidly brilliant illumination of the pristine wisdom of dharmatā,
 sentient beings' supreme, luminous appearance,
 lamp of pristine wisdom of dharmatā, pervading space,
 primordial, great brilliance of dharmatā,
 luminous nature,
 master of supreme mantra, dharmatā,
 king of insight, dharmatā,
 king of secret mantra, dharmatā,
 producer of great benefit, dharmatā,
 great uṣṇiṣa, dharmatā,
 wondrous uṣṇiṣa, dharmatā,
 master of space, dharmatā,
 supreme displayer of variety, dharmatā,
 master of all the buddhas,
 supreme real thing, dharmatā,
 supreme animate of dharmatā,
 supreme, all-joyful dharmatā,
 supreme possessor of eyes of dharmatā,
 supreme creator of various forms, dharmatā,
 dharmatā, supremely worthy of worship,
 dharmatā, supremely worthy of telling,
 supreme, great sage of dharmatā,
 holder of the three natural families,
 supreme possessor of secret mantra of dharmatā,

primordial, great samaya of dharmatā,
 primordial holder of secret mantra of dharmatā,
 supreme principal one of dharmatā,
 three jewels of dharmatā,
 holder of these three jewels of dharmatā,
 supreme teacher of the supreme three jewels of dharmatā,
 supreme, beneficial noose of dharmatā,
 natural completely victorious one,
 great holder of bindu of dharmatā,
 supreme vajra noose of dharmatā,
 supreme vajra hook of dharmatā,
 supreme, great vajra noose of dharmatā,

6.: **Synonyms Teaching the Mirror-like Pristine Wisdom**

And:

Vajra terrifier of dharmatā,
 Terrifier of even the terrifying,
 king of wrathful ones,
 terrifying six-faced one of dharmatā,
 six-eyed one with all powers,
 six-armed one, having all limbs of dharmatā,
 one with all the powers of dharmatā,
 supreme skeleton Kaṃkala of dharmatā,
 supreme clencher of fangs of dharmatā,
 wrathful one Halāhala of dharmatā,
 hundred-faced,
 having all faces,
 destroyer of the Lord of Death,
 king of the obstructing spirits of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,
 vajra power of dharmatā,
 supreme terrifier of dharmatā,
 vajra arrogance of dharmatā,
 vajra essence of dharmatā,
 vajra miracle,
 great vajra belly,
 born from a vajra,
 born from a vajra birth place,
 vajra self,
 vajra essence,
 vajra maṇḍala, like space,
 immovable,
 the one of great bliss, with a single lock of hair,
 Lady Ekajaṭī, with a single lock of hair,
 vajra yawning, [creating a gap in the continuity of saṃsāra,]
 wearing a moist elephant skin, primordially conquering the Lord of Death,
 great wrath of dharmatā,
 supremely frightening, with the great laughter of dharmatā,

great laughter of dharmatā,
 having the laughter of suchness,
 resounding with vajra laughter,
 Vajrasattva of dharmatā,
 great being of dharmatā,
 vajra king,
 supreme, great bliss of dharmatā,
 vajra wrath,
 vajra fierceness,
 vajra great joy,
 vajra HŪM,
 vajra HŪMkāra,
 [piercing] vajra arrow, pervading space,
 holding a vajra arrow, pervading space,
 vajra sword [that cuts through conceptual error,]
 cutting all bonds,
 holding all vajras,
 having a vajra,
 solitary vajra,
 victorious over war,
 clearing away war,
 eyes of unbearable, blazing vajras,
 hair of blazing vajras,
 vajra descent,
 great descent,
 the hundred vast eyes of dharmatā,
 vajra eyes,
 vajra body hairs,
 body with vajra body hairs,
 vajra body hair,
 vajra nails,
 vajra skin,
 holding a vajra mālā,
 possessing vajra glory,
 vajra ornaments,
 adorned with vajra ornaments,
 inexpressible laughter,
 the one with the six syllables,
 the one with the changeless six,
 vajra sound,
 great, gentle melody,
 great, letterless sound COMMA
 great roar,
 single sound of the three worlds,
 the one taste of the many sounds of the 'other' three worlds,
 soundless sound, pervading space without contradiction
 supreme among those possessing sound, the sound of dharmatā,
 pervading space.

7.: Teachings of Synonyms of the Absolute as Discriminating Pristine Wisdom

And:

The pure and true reality,
 The selfless dhātu,
 suchness,
 the pure and true ultimate,
 the ground without **relative** letters,
 the herd-leading bull that speaks of emptiness,
 proclaiming the sounds of the vast and profound, dharmatā,
 conch of Dharma of the self-existing nature
 gaṇḍi⁹⁶⁴ of suchness,
 non-abiding nirvāṇa,
 the great drum of the completely established, always pervading
 everywhere,
 excellent, formless form,
 absolute, formless form
 the variety of forms arisen from Samantabhadra, **pervading space**,
 the illuminating forms of all the glories **of dharmatā**,
 dharmakāya holding all the reflections **of dharmatā**, **without
remainder**,
ground that is impenetrable by anything,
ground that is not apprehendable by anything,
 famously great **dharmatā**,
 greatly famed **dharmatā**,
 ‘other’ three realms **pervading space**,
 great lord of the **three realms of dharmatā**,
 extremely exalted path of the noble ones **of dharmatā**
 supremely abiding in that,
 non-deteriorating, supreme youth **of dharmatā**,
 crest ornament of holy Dharma,
 youthful body in which the three worlds are one, the three worlds of
 dharmatā,
 supreme elder **of dharmatā**,
 supreme aged one **of dharmatā**,
 supreme self of all beings, **dharmatā**,
 source of phenomena, holding the major and minor marks,
 supreme of what is desired as pleasing,
 supreme of what is desired as beautiful,
 beautiful three worlds of the great secret,
 supreme world-knowing,
 universal, supreme goodness,
 supreme master of all,
 supreme, fearless master of the world,
 supreme world protector,
 place of friendship for the world,
partless, omnipresent pervader of the world,

unsurpassed, **partless and all-pervading** refuge,
 unsurpassed, **partless and all-pervading** protector,
partless and all-pervading enjoyment to the limits of 'other' space,
 ocean of omniscient pristine wisdom,
 cracking the eggshell of ignorance,
 partless and all-pervading conquest that has primordially overcome
 the net of saṃsāra,
 primordial peace of the afflictive emotions,
 producer of peace of the afflictive emotions,
 primordial and natural going to the **partless and all-pervading** other
 shore of saṃsāra,
 primordially attaining the empowerment of pristine wisdom,
 primordial possession of the crown of the five pristine wisdoms,
 naturally holding the ornaments of all the **partless and all-pervading**
 buddhas,
 naturally adorned with the ornaments of all the **partless and all-**
pervading buddhas,
 natural pacification of all suffering,
 supreme, three-fold clearing away,⁹⁶⁵
 the supremely limitless,
 attaining the supreme three liberations,
 essentially, certainly released from all obstructions,
 always abiding in equality, like space,
 always transcending all the defilements of the afflictive emotions,
 realizing the three times as timeless,
 the great supreme nāga **that is the source of happiness for all**
 sentient beings,
 supreme skull of noble ones,
 the skull of all good qualities,
 primordial liberation from all afflictive emotions,
 liberation from the beginning from all remainders,
 consecration on the path of 'other' space,
 'other' 'wish-fulfilling gem,
 holding an 'other' 'wish-fulfilling gem,
 all-pervading, supreme jewel,
 great, vast, 'other' wish-fulfilling tree,
 supreme, 'other,' excellent wish-fulfilling vase,⁹⁶⁶
 supreme doer,
 performer of benefits for all sentient beings,
 supreme in help and affection for sentient beings,
 supreme in knowledge of good and evil,
 supreme in knowing time,
 supreme in knowing the samaya of the sovereign,
 supreme in knowing good and evil for the **partless, all-pervading**
 sovereign,
 supreme in possessing the samaya of the sovereign,
 supreme in knowing the time of the sovereign and the sensory
 powers of sentient beings,
 skilled in the three kinds of **partless, all-pervading** liberation,

possessing and knowing all the good qualities of the excellent
 bhaga,
 supreme knowledge of all dharmas,
 supreme in the auspiciousness of utter peace arising,
 supreme auspiciousness of auspiciousness,
 auspicious fame,
 perfect fame,
 supreme, vast renown,
 existent goodness,
 absolute goodness,
 unmade goodness,
 supreme, great relief,
 supreme, great festival,
 supreme, great play of great joy,
 place of supreme respect and veneration,
 supremely joyous glory
 utterly joyous glory,
 glory of the very famous self,
 chief of the ones possessing the supreme,
 chief of the ones bestowing the supreme,
 absolute refuge,
 supreme among those worthy to be a refuge,
supreme enemy of all that is greatly terrifying,
 utterly supreme enemy of all that is greatly terrifying,
 primordially eliminating the terrifying and the eliminator of the
 terrifying,
 supreme hair tuft at the crown, **dharmatā**,
 supreme small hair tuft **of dharmatā**,
 supreme matted⁹⁶⁷ hair **of dharmatā**,
 supreme braids⁹⁶⁸ **of dharmatā**,
 having rushes⁹⁶⁹ **of dharmatā**,
 having a shaven head **of dharmatā**,
 supreme wearer of the crown **of dharmatā**,
 supreme among those of the five families **of dharmatā**,
 supreme among those with round, shaven heads,
 supreme holder of great yogic conduct **of dharmatā**,⁹⁷⁰
 supreme, pure yogic conduct **of dharmatā**,
 supreme, ultimate asceticism **of dharmatā**,
 supreme, **partless, omnipresent** asceticism **of dharmatā**,
 supreme abiding in the cleanliness **of dharmatā**,
 supreme Gautama **of dharmatā**,
 supreme brahmin **of dharmatā**,
 supreme Bhramā **of dharmatā**,
 supreme knowing or awareness of Bhramā⁹⁷¹ **as dharmatā**,
 having attained pure⁹⁷² nirvāṇa **as dharmatā**,
 supreme body of release, **dharmatā**
 supreme body of liberation, **dharmatā**,
 supreme body of complete liberation, **dharmatā**,
 supreme, peaceful liberation, **dharmatā**,

primordial pacification of proliferations,
 natural nirvāṇa,
 completely peaceful nirvāṇa,
 producing excellent, final deliverance,
 the realm of clearing away defiled pleasure and pain,
 the realm of annihilating defiled pleasure and pain,
 supreme freedom from passionate attachment,
 supremely transcending body,
 supremely exhausting imputation,
 supremely exhausting self-perpetuation,
 supremely unconquerable **by anyone**,
 supremely without example,
 supremely not manifesting as, not appearing as, and not
 illuminating consciousness,
 supreme that is partless, omnipresent, and all-pervading,
 supremely subtle and difficult to realize,
 the seed of the supreme, **partless, all-pervading** ground of all
 phenomena,
 the uncontaminated dhātu,
 the primordially **partless, all-pervading**, dustless, free from dust,
 and undefiled,
 the supreme that has primordially abandoned all faults,
 the supremely, naturally faultless,
 supreme, completely awakened pristine wisdom,
 completely awakened self of dharmatā,
 supreme, all-aware all-knowing,
 supreme transcendence of consciousness,
 the way of non-dual pristine wisdom,
 self-existing non-conception,
 supreme performer of the buddha activity of the buddhas of the
 three times,
 beginningless, endless buddhahood,
 first buddha,
 buddha **in which prajñā and skillful means are** mixed in a continuum
 without partiality,
 single eye of undefiled pristine wisdom,
 tathāgata possessing a body of pristine wisdom,
 lord of words **of dharmatā**,
 great speaker **of dharmatā**,
 supreme among beings who speak **of dharmatā**,
 king of speakers **of dharmatā**,
 holy speaker **of dharmatā**,
 supreme, **“other”** place or ground,
 supreme, **beyond** place or ground,
 supreme unassailable, unconquerable lion of speakers **of dharmatā**,
 supremely seen everywhere,
 supremely beheld everywhere,
 primordial, supreme joy,
 primordial, brilliant garland,

supremely beautiful to behold,
 the nature blazing with excellent light,
 primordial, glorious knot of eternity,
 supreme illuminator and maker of shining light,
 supreme, great physician,
 chief of great physicians,
 unsurpassed expeller of pain,
 supreme tree that bears all medicines, without remainder,
 supreme, **partless, omnipresent**, great enemy of all diseases,
 supreme one of the beautiful three worlds,
 supreme one of the 'other' three realms,
 glorious maṇḍala of the stars of **lunar** motion, **the deities of the**
'other' 1,620 chutsō [of a lunar month,]
 Dharma victory banner, pervading space,
 covering all with one supreme Dharma parasol,
 the supreme maṇḍala of lovingkindness and compassion **of**
dharmatā,
 master of the glorious lotus dance,
 lord of the glorious lotus dance,
 precious parasol of sovereign dharmakāya, **dharmatā**,
 the brilliance or great king that is all the buddhas, **dharmatā**,
 holding the self-nature of all the buddhas, **dharmatā**,
 the great yoga of all the buddhas, **dharmatā**,
 the single teaching of all the buddhas, **dharmatā**,
 the precious supreme vajra, **dharmatā**,
 glorious, supreme empowerment **in dharmatā**,
 the selfhood of all precious jewels, **dharmatā**,
 the supreme lord of all precious jewels, **dharmatā**,
 the lord of the world and self of all, **dharmatā**,
 the vajra holder who is lord of all, **dharmatā**,
 the great mind of all the buddhas, **dharmatā**,
 abiding in the mind of all the buddhas, **dharmatā**,
 the great body of all the buddhas, **dharmatā**,
 the great speech of all the buddhas, **dharmatā**,
 the great shining of the vajra sun, **dharmatā**,
 the immaculate light of the vajra moon, **dharmatā**,
 the first to be free from passion, **dharmatā**,
 the greatly passionate **innate joy that is coemergent with extreme**
passionate attachment,
 the blazing light of the various colors **of dharmatā**,
 place of enlightenment, the perfect vajra **that is dharmatā**,
 dharma holder of buddha speech, **dharmatā**,
 the glorious buddha born from a lotus, **partless, all-pervading**
dharmatā,
 holder of the pristine wisdom treasure of omniscience, **dharmatā**,
 the king holding various miraculous displays **of dharmatā**,
 great holder of the buddha awareness **of dharmatā**,
 supreme, sharp vajra **of dharmatā**,
 supreme, great sword **of dharmatā**,

supreme, changeless **primordial** purity,
 supreme, great vehicle **of dharmatā**,
 supreme, **partless, all-pervading** cutter-off of suffering
 supreme, great weapon, **dharmatā**,
 vajra Dharma, **dharmatā**,
 profound vajra, **dharmatā**,
 dzinadzik, or victor of victors,
 vajra understanding **of dharmatā**,
 supreme awareness that accords with reality,
dharmatā in which all the perfections are primordially perfect,
 all the levels of dharmatā,
 possessing the ornament of all the levels of dharmatā,
 primordially, completely pure Dharma,
 Dharma without **the two kinds of self**,
 the pure and true pristine wisdom **of dharmatā**,
 the excellent moonlight of dharmadhātu,
 the great exertion of dharmatā,
 the great yoga of dharmatā,
 the net of miracles **of dharmatā**,
 the supreme master of all causes, dharmatā,
 the possessor of all the vajra seats or ways of being, **dharmatā**,
 the ultimate one of all vajras, **dharmatā**,
dharmatā, holding the kāyas of pristine wisdom, without remainder,
 total goodness,⁹⁷³ **of dharmatā**,
 excellent understanding of dharmatā,
 essence of the level of eyes everywhere, **dharmatā**,
 the supreme holder of transmigrating beings,
 buddha essence, sugatagarbha, **dharmatā**,
 the supreme holder of various wheels of emanation, **dharmatā**,
 the supreme nature of all things of dharmatā,
 holding all things of dharmatā,
 appearing as the various objects or goals of **partless, all-pervading**
 dharmatā,
dharmatā holding the essence of all phenomena,
 the great prajñā that apprehends all phenomena in an instant,
 supreme, complete realization of all phenomena,
 supreme understanding of the sage **of dharmatā**,
 ultimate arising⁹⁷⁴ of the ultimate, pure and true, ultimate existence
 and truth,
 unmoving, true self **that is dharmatā**,
 utterly pure and clear, true self, **dharmatā**,
 holding the enlightenment of the perfect buddhas **of dharmatā**,
 perception of all the buddhas,
tongues of pristine wisdom flames, with very luminous light.

8.: **Synonyms Teaching the Pristine Wisdom of Equality**

And:

Excellent establishment of desired goals,

purifier of all the lower realms,
 purifier of all faults,
 supreme protector of all sentient beings,
 liberator of all sentient beings,
 sole warrior, **primordially** victorious in war with the afflictive emotions,
 conquering the arrogance of the enemy, ignorance,
 having a mind open to dharmatā,
 supreme holder of charm, **dharmatā**,
 supreme possessor of glory,
 supreme one of the stable nature of phenomena,
 supreme hero of the stable nature of phenomena,
 supreme wrath **of dharmatā**, holding a hideous form,
dharmatā with arms everywhere,
dharmatā with legs of miracle everywhere,
dharmatā possessing all arms,
 supreme dancer **of dharmatā**,
 menstrual blood and sun of naturally pure dharmatā,
 partless, all-pervading, primordially pure semen and moon,⁹⁷⁵
 the non-dual, single meaning of dharmatā, the meaning of Dharma,
 the indestructible absolute,
 awareness of dharmatā, possessing realities of various forms,
 continuity of the mind of dharmatā,
 continuity of the mind of existence,
 continuity of consciousness of dharmatā, **partless and all-pervading**,
 continuity of consciousness of existence of dharmatā, **partless and all-pervading**,
 all the realities of dharmatā, without remainder,
 all the joys of dharmatā, without remainder,
 essence without relative real things, the joy of emptiness,
 essence without relative real things, the passion of emptiness,
 essence without relative real things, the understanding of emptiness,
 ground that has primordially abandoned the afflictive emotions of saṃsāra,
 great joy of the 'other' three realms,
 primordially pure, white cloud of semen,
 excellent autumn⁹⁷⁶ moonlight of dharmatā
 beautiful, young, rising sun of dharmatā
 light on the nails of great desire **of dharmatā**,
 excellent, knotted blue locks of dharmatā,
 holding the excellent, great blue hair of dharmatā,
 the great, glorious, beautifully radiant jewel of dharmatā,
 supreme possession of buddha emanation, the adornment **of dharmatā** that
 supremely shakes all of a hundred world realms,
 supreme in possessing the great power of the legs of miracle of dharmatā,
 supreme in holding the great mindfulness of suchness,

supreme king of the four mindfulnesses of dharmatā,
 king of all the meditative absorptions of dharmatā,
 fragrant flowers of the limbs of enlightenment of dharmadhātu,
 joyful, partless, all-pervading flowers,
 the ocean of tathāgata qualities of dharmatā,
 supreme insight of the eight-limbed path of the natural state,
 supreme, true knowledge of the path to buddhahood, dharmatā,
 supreme, strong passion of dharmatā for sentient beings,
 supreme passionlessness, like space,
 primordially abiding in the minds of all sentient beings,
 primordially swift 'other' mind of all sentient beings,
 supreme knowledge of the sense objects of all sentient beings,
 supreme ravisher of the minds of all sentient beings,
 supreme holder of the five skandhas that are completely pure,
 supreme abiding in the most ultimate release of all,
 supremely skilled in all kinds of release,
 supremely abiding on the path of all kinds of release,
 supreme teacher of the path of all kinds of release,
 the twelve limbs of relative interdependence, supremely planting⁹⁷⁷
 the root of saṃsāra,
 supreme holder of the twelve aspects⁹⁷⁸ of pure dharmatā,
 possessing the aspects of the four [noble] truths of dharmatā,
 holding realization of the eight knowledges of dharmatā,⁹⁷⁹
 possessing the twelve aspects of true meaning of dharmatā,
 knowing the joy of the twelve aspects of dharmatā,
 enlightened by twenty aspects, the fingers and toes of dharmatā,
 supreme, all-knowing, complete buddha, dharmatā,
 sending forth immeasurable buddha emanation bodies, embodying
 both of the two truths,
 supreme, complete realization of all partless and all-pervading
 'other' moments,
 supreme knowledge of all objects in one moment or instant of mind,
 supreme performance of benefit for beings, by various vehicles,
 primordially abiding in one vehicle, though release being taught in
 three vehicles,
 the partless all-pervading self in which karma and afflictive
 emotions are primordially exhausted,
 primordially crossing over all the relationships of the river of birth
 and ocean of saṃsāra,
 the ground in which habitual propensities of the afflictive emotions
 are primordially abandoned,
 supreme, great compassion of dharmatā,
 supreme prajñā and skillful means of dharmatā,
 dharmatā, the possessor of supreme benefit,
 supreme performer of benefit for sentient beings,
 the fundamental reality in which conceptualized perception and
 consciousness have primordially ceased,
 the object of mind that is all 'other' sentient beings,
 the supreme knowledge of mind that knows all sentient beings,

primordially abiding within the minds of all sentient beings,
 equally entering into the minds of all sentient beings,
 satisfying the minds of all sentient beings,
 great joy abiding in the minds of all sentient beings,
 primordially established ultimate without confusion,
 the ground that has primordially abandoned all errors,
 mind without doubts about the three aspects, times, objects, and
 natures,⁹⁸⁰

the self of the three qualities⁹⁸¹ of all realities,
 discriminating the skandhas in all the moments of the three times,
 becoming completely enlightened in an instant,
 holding the nature of all the buddhas,
 supreme, bodiless body,
 primordially realizing the ultimate body,
 primordially emanating ten million bodies,
 displaying the forms of dharmatā, without remainder,
 the secret, great crest jewel.

9.: **Synonyms Teaching the All-Accomplishing Pristine Wisdom**

And:

Great secret realized by all buddhas,
 Primordial, unsurpassed enlightenment of the buddhas,
 Letterless ground of dharmatā that is the birthplace of secret
 mantra,
 the three families of the great, secret mantra of dharmatā,
 the creator of all benefits of the secret mantra of dharmatā,
 the letterless, great drop of dharmatā,
 the five syllables of the great emptiness,
 the changeless five [topics] of the great emptiness,
 the six syllables of the great drop,
 the changeless six of the great drop,
 having all aspects and having none,
 primordially holding the four drops,
 innate joy of pristine wisdom that is free from abiding on the dark
 side of dharmatā and transcends the light side,
 innate pristine wisdom,
 primordially holding the peak of the four concentrations⁹⁸² of
 dharmatā,
 primordially holding the ultimate attainment of the four
 concentrations of dharmatā,
 knowing all the parts or limbs of the supreme meditation of
 dharmatā,
 meditative absorption with supreme insight into the continuity of
 dharmatā,
 having the body of naturally established meditative absorption,
 the supreme body of suchness,
 the king of sambhogakāyas, the sambhogakāya of suchness,
 the supreme nirmāṇakāya, the nirmāṇakāya of dharmatā,

holding the lineage of buddha emanations of both the two truths,
 sending forth various emanations of both the two truths, in [all] the
 ten directions,
 properly performing benefits for sentient beings,
 the god of gods, the god of partless, all-pervading, natural
 luminosity,
 supreme lord of the gods, dharmatā,
 lord of the jealous gods that is dharmatā,
 master of givers, dharmatā,
 deathless lord, dharmatā,
 supreme guru of the gods, self-arising pristine wisdom,
 supreme producer of conquest,
 the partless, all-pervading ground or root of conquering incidental
 defilements,
 the conquest-producing lord, non-dual pristine wisdom,
 god of gods, the god of partless, all-pervading non-dual pristine
 wisdom,
 ‘other’ or supreme Bhramā,
 ‘other’ or supreme Viṣṇu,
 ‘other’ or supreme powerful one,⁹⁸³
 ‘other’ or supreme Rāhu,
 other or supreme Śakra,⁹⁸⁴
 ‘other’ or supreme planet Jupiter, Brihaspati,
 ‘other’ or supreme Ganeśa,
 ‘other’ Īśvara,⁹⁸⁵
 the Bhramā of dharmatā, and so on,
 naturally crossing over from the wilderness of saṃsāra,
 the single, natural teacher of beings,
 the single, natural guru of beings, supremely famed in the ten
 directions of the world,
 the supreme, great patron of Dharma,
 the supreme wearer of the armor of lovingkindness,
 the supreme wearer of the armor of compassion, dharmatā,
 the wielder of the sword, arrow, or bow of prajñā, dharmatā,
 primordially clearing away battle with the two obscurations,
 the hero who has primordially tamed the enemy, Māra and the other
 māras,
 the eliminator of fear of the four māras,
 the defeater of the host of Māra,
 the perfect Buddha who is leader of the world,
 worthy of offerings,
 worthy of praise,
 supreme object of homage,
 supreme among those who are always worthy of respect,
 supreme of those worthy of reverence and honor,
 highest guru, worthy of prostrations,
 dharmatā, traversing the three worlds in a single step,
 limitless like the supreme container, space,
 supreme, pure cleanliness, knowing the three topics,⁹⁸⁶

possessing supreme qualities like higher perception, retentiveness
of what is heard, and so forth,
self-arisen bodhisattva of [pristine wisdom,]
great being of suchness,
great miracle of dharmatā,
naturally world-transcending,
ultimate perfection of prajñā,
attainment of the suchness of prajñā,
one with all self-knowledge and other-knowledge,
supreme individual who benefits all,
supremely beyond exemplification,
transcending worldly examples,
supreme master of 'other' knowing and known,
supreme principal ones of Dharma patrons,
excellent teacher of the meaning of the four mudrās, karma mudrā,
dharma mudrā, samaya mudrā and mahāmudrā,
supreme object of reverence for transmigrating beings,
supreme of the three ways of release⁹⁸⁷ and those traveling on them
completely pure glory of absolute reality,
the three worlds of great good fortune,
producer of all prosperity,
supremely glorious Mañjuśrī.

10.: **Homage to the Five Pristine Wisdoms**

And:

Supreme vajra that grants the supreme,
the ultimate pure and true,
arisen from emptiness
essence of emptiness,
enlightenment of the buddhas, **dharmatā**,
play of the buddhas, **dharmatā**,
buddha smile, **dharmatā**,
buddha laughter, **dharmatā**,
buddha speech, **dharmatā**,
buddha mind, **dharmatā**,
the ground without all the phenomena that arise from dharmatā,
the place from which all the buddhas **of the two truths** arise,
arisen from the space of dharmatā,
arisen from the pristine wisdom of dharmatā,
the net of miracles of dharmatā,
the play or dance of buddhahood, **dharmatā**,
dharmatā abiding as the nature of all aspects of all objects, times,
and places,
self-arising pristine wisdom, dharmakāya.

When *Expressing the Absolute Names of Mañjuśrī* teaches these many synonyms of the absolute, it bears witness to all the tantras and is their measure. It expresses the very many, nay extremely many, synonyms, of the ground empty of all [relative] phenomena, dharmatā, suchness, and so forth.

11. **The Meaning of These Names is One with Emptiness of Other**

In sum, those who say that the meaning of this tantra is produced buddhas and the [relative] truth of the path⁹⁸⁸ are not in accord with the intention of Vajradhara, since 1) both of those are relative; 2) these names [above] are [included in] the [absolute] truth of cessation; and 3) pure and true “expression of the relative names of Mañjuśrī” is not what is being taught.

The meaning of these many synonyms and very many other similar teachings is one as the great absolute empty of other, [dharma]dhātu itself. That is the ultimate ground inseparable from the fruition without contamination, but with the nature of limitless, inseparable qualities pervading space.

Therefore, in this case of teaching the [names of the] profound ultimate, it is not right to understand that the different names have different meanings. Don’t be fooled by some who say “The different tantras each have their own different intention.”

12. **After Eliminating Criticisms, Teaching That Such an Absolute Really Exists**

Objection: If the ultimate ground is inseparable in nature from the fruition, what use is the path?

Answer: This needs to be taught by making some distinctions. Eternally all-pervading pristine wisdom, the absolute truth, in its natural, complete purity, is indeed without distinction in everyone. However, there are differences between different individuals in terms of whether incidental defilements are purified or not.

This is like the single sky. The essence of the single sky is naturally pure and cloudless, and yet the sky is cloudy and unclear in some places, and clear in others. It is not contradictory that the sky is not clear of clouds in one area, and exists clear of clouds in another area. Depending on the area, the sky may be either clear or cloudy.

Similarly, the single, completely pure space of the absolute dhātu abides with defilements in some beings, and it abides without defilements in others. The dhātu is classified as the ground or the fruition, according to whether a certain individual has defilements or not. However, there are no such differences in dharmatā itself.

Individuals who have completely abandoned incidental defilements do not need to put the truth of the path into practice again. Their training is complete. They have already attained the kāya of pristine wisdom. Other individuals must properly practice the truth of the path [to manifest that same enlightenment.] Though ultimate buddhahood exists intrinsically within them, they do not manifest it, because it is obscured by incidental defilements.

When individuals meditate on the path, they do not so to produce the fruition, dharmakāya. Naturally changeless, uncompounded dharmadhātu, dharmakāya, is not the kind of thing that could be created by any cause and conditions at all. Nor does it need not be created, because it abides eternally in natural self-existence. If, even though it exists already, it needed to be produced again, there would be an absurd, infinite regress. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

Further, child of noble family, there are two kinds of causes, 1. producing causes and 2. illuminating causes.⁹⁸⁹ Causes like a potter's wheel are called producing or creating causes. Causes like fiery torch that illuminate substances that are already present in darkness are called illuminating causes.

Child of noble family, when great nirvāṇa is attained, it is not newly established by a producing cause. Since it already exists, there is only an illuminating cause that makes it clearly visible. A cause illuminating something that already exists is like this: [The absolute versions of the] thirty-seven factors on the side of enlightenment and the six perfections included within the truth of the path already exist within dharmakāya. [Causes that eliminates hindrances to their manifestation] are called an illuminating causes.

The intention of this extensive teaching is that there are 1) producing causes and effects and 2) causes and effects of separation or illumination.

Objection: If the path does not produce dharmakāya, that dharmakāya is the fruition of the path is contradictory.

Answer: It is not contradictory, because attaining dharmakāya by abandoning defilements is a fruition of separation.

Unlike dharmakāya, the two form kāyas do not abide in beings as primordial, intrinsic aspects. They do have to be created by accumulation of relative merit. Thus, the generally listed six kinds of causes: 1) producing cause, 2) mutual cause, 3) associated cause, 4) simultaneous or concomitant cause, 5) all-pervading cause, and 6) ripening cause; and four kinds of conditions: 1) causal condition, 2) fundamental condition, 3) object condition, and 4) immediately preceding condition; are included within two: 1) creation of natures and 2) separation from defilements.

Similarly, the usual five kinds of effects that are taught: 1) fruition according with the cause, 2) fruition of ripening, 3) fruition produced by the nature of the person, 4) fruition of separation, and 5) produced fruition; are included within two: 1) produced fruitions and 2) fruitions of separation.

The [two different] fruitions of the path [corresponding to these two divisions] are the different buddhas of the two truths: 1) absolute buddhas of dharmakāya, who fundamentally and primordially exist, and who perfect the benefit for oneself, are produced by a fruition of separation; and 2) relative buddhas of the form kāyas, who do not exist previously, and who perfect the benefit for others, are produced fruitions.

These two kinds of fruition exist must be well-discriminated by the correct view. That involves realizing the difference between 1) emptiness of self, [applying to produced fruitions] and 2) emptiness of other, [applying to fruitions of separation.]

Hence there must be discrimination of the difference between 1) mere non-existence, non-establishment, being devoid of, having ceased, and having been purified from, and 2) the existent ground of these [non-existent] qualities.

Therefore, there must be discrimination of the difference between non-affirming negation and affirming negation, excluding resolution and establishing resolution, and being naturally abandoned and being naturally realized.

All of that is so, because of realizing the difference between 1) the empty emptiness of a thing of itself, the emptiness of non-things and 2) the non-empty emptiness of a thing of other things, the kind of emptiness that is the [real] essence of non-things.

That entails realizing the difference between what is and is not all-pervading emptiness, the emptiness of non-affirming negation, emptiness involved with causal interdependence, within the relative, emptiness of the born, emptiness of the unborn, nihilistic emptiness, and emptiness having the supreme of all aspects.

13.: **Concluding Advice**

Since all that is so, capable ones who are concerned with liberation and are endowed with the great compassion should realize the absolute that is empty of other. Then they should fully teach it to others.

If the absolute that is empty of other is not realized, the supreme, first buddha is not realized. Correctly Expressing the Absolute names of Mañjuśrī is not realized. The pristine wisdom kāya of Vajradhara and the mantra vehicle are not realized. The unsurpassable level of a blessed buddha cannot be attained.

With the intention of teaching these points, the blessed emanation of lord Avalokiteśvara, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, says:

Regarding as validly cognized the *Correct Expression of Names*, which makes sentient beings free from doubt, the Blessed One taught Vajrapāṇi the *Correct Expression of Names*, the definitive meaning of all [the different] kinds of mantra.

Those who do not know the *Supreme First Buddha*⁹⁹⁰, **the absolute ground of emptiness of other, sugatagarbha**, do not know the **absolute kāyas of pristine wisdom explained in the Correct Expression of Names**. Those who do not know the *Correct Expression of Names* do not know the pristine wisdom kāyas of a vajra holder. Those who do not know the pristine wisdom kāyas of a vajra holder do not know the mantra vehicle. Those who do not know the mantra vehicle are in saṃsāra. They are separate from the path of a blessed vajra holder.

Therefore, all authentic gurus – **so that their students will not be helpless, because they lack these essential teachings** – should teach the supreme *First Buddha*, **the absolute ground of emptiness of other, sugatagarbha**. Students who care about liberation should listen.

That same protector, **Great Compassion, Avalokiteśvara**, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, teaches a complete summary of the meanings of these many synonymous names. Likewise, the *Correct Expression of Names* itself says:

The Tathāgata fully taught the supreme, changeless pristine wisdom of a vajra holder, the essence of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, in 162 stanzas with accompanying supplications.

At the end of all those teachings, it says:

Drawing out **the ultimate essence** of all vehicles from these 162 stanzas, these yogins do not reject,⁹⁹¹ **but accept**, the totally good dhātu of a blessed vajra holder, **the nature of everything**, supreme, changeless great bliss, the **naturally luminous** realm of space.

Then the **primordial and natural** accumulation of **primordially, naturally**, completely pure pristine wisdom entirely illuminates the ultimate. It holds profound and vast, **absolute** form that is naturally luminous and without beginning and end. Thus, a sattva, a sentient being, becomes a Vajrasattva, a vajra being of great joy, always abiding in **primordial, natural** freedom from conceptual defilements like thoughts of me and mine, and of grasper and grasped.

Such a one is **primordially and naturally** free from the omnipresent afflictive emotions, **primordially and naturally** completely liberated from all habitual propensities of saṃsāra, **primordially and naturally** free from all coming and going, [and so, such a one is] a knower of the **fundamental** nature of all phenomena.

The *svābhavikakāya* is the **ground or** essence without proliferating complexity that remains within itself. Then it increases that **absolute** experience through meditative absorption, and the support **and supported**⁹⁹² of various dhāraṇīs. By that, the wishes of all beings are completely fulfilled, as if by an excellent wish-fulfilling vase, tree, or jewel.

This is not experienced by even the greatest sages **or ṛiṣis among the Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas**.⁹⁹³ It pacifies⁹⁹⁴ the great mass of [illusory] sentient beings. **In their unconfused knowledge, these yogins have various appearances of unreality** of the realms of beings, truly and purely summarized as being like illusions, dreams, reflections, and echoes.

Thus, they are **worthy of being** offered to by the three realms, because, within the **discriminating** self-awareness of pristine wisdom, these yogins experience the supreme, changeless bliss **of absolute sugatagarbha that is empty of other**.

c". **The Synonyms Taught in the Also Have Meanings Other than Emptiness of Self**

Similarly, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* teaches synonyms of the absolute ground:

How are countless names explained by one name? Parinirvāṇa, **'complete great nirvāṇa,' refers to the absolute empty of other, sugatagarbha**. It is also called:

natural nirvāṇa pervading space,
 the unborn **ground**,
 the unarisen **ground**,
 the unproduced **ground**,
 the uncompounded **ground**,
 the **ultimate object** of refuge,
 the place and support **of all phenomena, pervading space, primordial, natural, complete liberation, pervading space,**
 the **primordial and natural** shining of illuminating light⁹⁹⁵
 pervading space,
 the **primordial and natural** lamp **pervading space**,
 the **primordial and natural** ultimate,
primordial and natural fearlessness,
primordial and natural irreversibility,
primordial and natural realms of bliss,
primordial and natural peace,
primordial and natural marklessness,
primordial and natural non-duality,
primordial and natural single action,
 being **primordially and naturally** completely cool,⁹⁹⁶
 being **primordially and naturally** without darkness,
primordial and natural non-obstruction,

primordial and natural freedom from disputation,
 the primordial and natural great vastness,
 primordial and natural sweet nectar,⁹⁹⁷
 primordial and natural auspiciousness.

Thus, the meaning of one name is divided into many names.

And:

Child of noble family, the primordial and natural meditative absorption of Going as a Hero pervading space has five names. It is called: 1) the meditative absorption of Going as a Hero; 2) the primordial and natural perfection of prajñā; 3) the primordial and natural Vajra-like Meditative Absorption; 4) the primordial and natural Lion's Roar Meditative Absorption; and 5) Buddha nature.

Limitless such names are designated in accord with [that absorption] having such and such faultless aspects or qualities that are relevant in such and such situations.

Here the divisions of meditative absorptions in accord with the two truths must be known. The limitless absolute absorptions like that of Going as a Hero are [aspects of] buddha nature or sugatagarbha itself. The same excellent sūtra teaches this extensively:

Moreover, child of noble family, "buddha nature," is the meditative absorption of primordially and naturally Going as a Hero. Since the fundamental nature like the essence of butter [in milk] is naturally luminous, changeless, coemergent purity that is not fabricated, but is self-existent, it is called "the mother of all the buddhas," [prajñāpāramitā.] By the power of the primordial and natural meditative absorption of Going as a Hero, the tathāgatas [abide in] primordial and natural, eternal, blissful, [true] selfhood that is completely pure. All sentient beings also have the primordial and natural meditative absorption of Going as a Hero, but they have never meditated in it. That is because it arises only within pristine wisdom, and not within consciousness; and so, they have never seen it. That is why they have not become unsurpassably, truly, completely enlightened.

Also, the *Hundred and Eight Names of the Perfection of Prajñā*, teaching the synonyms of the absolute ground of emptiness of other, says:

The Mother of all the conquerors,
 Of the present, past, and future,
 Is you, O excellent goddess.⁹⁹⁸
 They are your conqueror children.⁹⁹⁹

I will tell the names
 Of the good mother of buddhas
 Who has a natureless nature.¹⁰⁰⁰
 Those hoping for riches should listen:¹⁰⁰¹

Perfection of prajñā pervading space, in which ground and
 fruition are inseparable,
 omniscience of the inseparable ground and fruition,
 knowledge of aspects of the path to the inseparable ground
 and fruition,
 knowledge of all aspects of the inseparable ground and
 fruition,
 the pure and true ultimate that is the inseparable ground and
 fruition,
 suchness that is the inseparable ground and fruition,
 suchness without other that is the inseparable ground and
 fruition
 truth that is the inseparable ground and fruition,
 just that-ness that is the inseparable ground and fruition,
 the pure and true,
 the non-erroneous, inseparable ground and fruition,
 emptiness that is the inseparable ground and fruition,
 the markless, inseparable ground and fruition,
 the wishless, inseparable ground and fruition,
 absence of real things that is the inseparable ground and
 fruition,
 the essence of the inseparable ground and fruition,
 the essence without real things that is the inseparable ground
 and fruition,
 dharmatā, the inseparable ground and fruition,
 dharmadhātu, the inseparable ground and fruition,
 the way of abiding of phenomena, as the inseparable ground
 and fruition,
 the changelessness of phenomena, within the inseparable
 ground and fruition,
 the faultlessness of phenomena, within the inseparable
 ground and fruition,
 the characterization of phenomena, within the inseparable
 ground and fruition,
 the two-fold selflessness of phenomena, within the inseparable
 ground and fruition,
 the ground of essencelessness of the relative,
 the ground without relative sentient beings,
 the ground without relative life,
 the ground without relative nurturing,
 the ground without relative persons,
 the ground without relative individuals,
 the expressible absolute,
 the inexpressible relative,
 the ground free from the mind, mental, and consciousness of
 the relative,
 the non-equal, pervading space,
 the unequal and equal,
 the ground pervading space without “mine,”

the ground without self-aggrandizement, pervading space,
 the ground without proliferating complexity, pervading space,
 the ground free from proliferating complexity, pervading space,
 the ground entirely transcending proliferating complexity, pervading space,
 the mother of all the buddhas, pervading space,
 the creatress of all the bodhisattvas, pervading space,
 the acceptor of all the Śrāvakas, pervading space,
 the producer and acceptor of all Pratyekabuddhas, in all worlds,
 the primordial and natural accumulator of inexhaustible stores of merit,
 the vajra descent of self-arising pristine wisdom,
 The performer of the miracles of both the two truths,
 complete purifier of the relative divine eye, and perfecter of the absolute divine eye,
 the absolute divine ear being cleansed and the relative divine ear being completely cleansed,
 awareness and knowledge of other minds,
 mindfulness and remembering of former lives,
 mindfulness and remembering of former death,
 transmigration, and birth,
 [primordial] exhaustion and [temporal] exhausting of all afflictive emotions,
 primordial, natural noble one,
 primordial, natural cleanliness,
 primordial, natural accumulation,
 primordial, natural existence of the four objects of mindfulness,
 primordial, natural possession of the power of the four true abandonments,
 primordial, natural possession of the feet¹⁰⁰² of the four legs of miracle,
 primordial, natural completion and purification of the five powers,
 primordial, natural production of the five strengths,
 primordial, natural faultlessness,
 primordial, natural beautification with the jewels of the seven limbs of enlightenment,
 primordial, natural completion and giving of the seven noble riches,
 primordial, natural completion and teaching of the noble eight-fold path.
 primordial, natural completion and teaching of the nine successive meditative equilibriums,
 primordial, natural establishment and practice of the ten powers of a bodhisattva

primordial, natural abiding in and [temporal] production of
 abiding in the ten bodhisattva levels,
 primordial, natural [primordial] perfection and [temporal]
 perfecting of the ten powers,
 beautified by the primordial and natural ten totalities,
 primordial, natural establishment and [temporal] exercise of
 the ten knowledges,
 frightening the enemies that are the ten latent tendencies,
 primordial and natural [primordial] establishment and
 [temporal] establishing of meditative concentrations,
 primordial and natural transcendence and [temporal]
 transcending of the formless realms,
 the realm, pervading space, that is praised by all the truly,
 completely enlightened buddhas, and that is the primordial,
 natural producer of all knowledges.

Thus, the qualities of higher perception belonging to the truth of
 cessation, the objects of mindfulness, and so forth, are primordially
 complete in the absolute perfection of prajñā. By their blessing, the
 corresponding relative qualities are established, and the same is
 true for the following:

The ground empty of the inner,
 the ground empty of the outer,
 the ground empty of inner and outer,
 the ground possessing emptiness that is the mind realizing
 emptiness,
 the ground empty of the great, outer vessel of the world,
 emptiness of the ground of seeing [relative] real things as absolute
 phenomena,
 emptiness of the ground of compounded virtues,
 emptiness of being established in the ground of the uncompounded
 virtues to be attained,
 emptiness of the [non-empty] ground of transcendence of extremes
 of benefiting others needing to be established,
 emptiness of the [non-empty] ground of beginningless and endless
 saṃsāra,
 emptiness of the [non-empty] ground of unrejected goodness
 [needing to] be established,
 emptiness of the [non-empty] ground that is the enlightened family
 that exists by nature, needing to be established,
 emptiness of the non-empty ground of all absolute phenomena
 [needing to be] established, since they are already pure,
 emptiness of the [non-empty] ground of characteristics of the major
 and minor marks [needing to be] established,
 emptiness of the unapprehendable,
 emptiness of essence,
 emptiness of essence of unreal things.

The last three were explained above.

the unarisen ground, pervading space,
 the unproduced ground, pervading space,
 the unceasing ground, pervading space,
 that which is unannihilated at any time,
 the impermanent powerlessness of space,
 real, [relative] phenomena not being one reality,
 the real essence not being different realities,
 not coming due to being uncompounded,
 not going, due to being uncompounded,
 the object of meditating on 'other' interdependent arising, that is
 not an object resolved by logical examination, because it transcends
 the realm of logic,
 not an object of consciousness, because it transcends objects of
 consciousness,
 without the all ground consciousness,
 without compounded characteristics, pervading space,
 not to be logically examined, because it transcends logic,
 not to be apprehended by consciousness,
 without destruction of beginning and end as nothingness being
 produced,
 the unmoving essence, pervading space,
 the non-dual essence, pervading space,
 phenomena not being non-dual, in the sense that they unite dual
 aspects of prajñā and means and of bliss and emptiness,
 primordial, natural peace of the ground, pervading space,
 the ground, pervading space, abandoning mental engagement by
 consciousness,
 the ground, pervading space, that has no [need of] antidotes,
 the ground, pervading space, that is never contaminated by
 defilements,
 the ground, pervading space, that is like the paths of the planets in
 space, partless, all-pervading, continuous, and so forth,
 the relative not being said to be existent nor the absolute to be non-
 existent,
 the relative having an essence like that of a dream, and the absolute
 being 'other' dream,
 illusion-like dharmatā,
 like the illusory circle of a whirling torch, and
 the one taste of all phenomena of the absolute essence,

[Bhāvaviveka's] *Precious Lamp of the Middle Way* cites the words of the Blessed One saying, "'Absolute truth' is the eighteen kinds of emptiness."¹⁰⁰³ The intention is the eighteen of the [absolute] ground of emptiness. Also, the *Perfection of Prajñā in Few Letters* says:

The absolute is the perfection of prajñā. She is the creatress of all
 the buddhas, the mother of the bodhisattvas, who ravishes away
 incidental evil deeds and bestows enlightenment.

The *Hundred and Fifty modes of the Perfection of Prajñā* says:

OM **Vajra kāya**, mind vajra of enlightenment.
 OM Conduct of Samantabhadra, producing phenomena.¹⁰⁰⁴
 OM Wish-fulfilling gem **that is the five pristine wisdoms**.
 OM Unceasing, **pervading space**.
 OM Reversal of birth.
 OM All **uncreated phenomena, other than those of** consciousness.
 OM Desireless, great dharmatā.
 OM Armor of **absolute** exertion.
 OM Omnipresent **dharmatā**.
 OM Mind of vajra hardness, HŪM.
 OM All the **absolute** tathāgatas.
 OM Completely pure essence.
 OM Completely pure knowledge of dharmatā.

And:

OM Perfection of prajñā.

And:

OM Completely pure speech of all the **absolute** tathāgatas.

And also:

Mind vajra of all the **absolute** tathāgatas...

Also, the *Jewel Cloud Sūtra* says:

By those, it has the qualities of being self-known in discrimination, undefiled, uncovered, and completely pure, perfect, supreme, absolute, eminent, eternal, stable, continuous, and indestructible. Whether relative tathāgatas appear or not, this dharmadhātu, tathāgatagarbha, is solely existent.

And:

Child of noble family, that **sugatagarbha** is called "suchness."
 It is called "the pure and true ultimate."
 It is called "Omniscience."
 It is called "knowing all aspects."
 It is called "the inconceivable dhātu."
 It is called "the non-dual dhātu."

And:

Blessed One, what is "the pure and true?"

The Blessed One spoke saying, "It is that **which is non-deceptive**. It is suchness, unerring suchness, and suchness that is not other."

That was taught to clear away the view of those who maintain that [the existence of] absolute truth is impossible. Similarly, the *Sūtra of the Miraculous Meditative Absorption that Ascertains Utter Peace* says:¹⁰⁰⁵

What is not true and pure is not **absolute** suchness.

What is not suchness is not the **absolute** Tathāgata.

The Tathāgata is true, pure and true suchness, unerring suchness, suchness that is not other, not false, a speaker of truth, a speaker of the pure and true, a possessor of pristine wisdom, the weapon of a speaker of awareness, a possessor of limitless pristine wisdom, omniscient, all-seeing, a possessor of the **absolute** ten powers, an attainer of the **absolute** four fearlessnesses, **an attainer of primordial, natural** perfection, non-conceptual, completely non-conceptual, uncovered **by consciousness, partless, all-pervading, transcending the instantaneous, and so forth**, like space, innumerable in its numerable phenomena, unmade, unborn, unceasing, not engaged **with relative relationships**, limitless, non-dwelling **in relative relationships**, unknowable **by consciousness**, not an object of consciousness, not moving anywhere, **since it is has no coming and going, primordially and naturally** completely pure, **primordially and naturally** free from afflictive emotions, unborn **from a cause**, without **conditioned** action, without abiding **in relative relationships**.

Those words teach the synonyms of suchness, the ground of emptiness. This sūtra should be consulted, because it clearly teaches the profound ultimate. Also, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, as translated by Devacandra, says:

Liberation is the **absolute** Tathāgata. It is **the all-pervading ground, primordially, naturally** free from forms **related to the relative** and all their bondage. This **ground, pervasive like space**, is unborn, unproduced, without birth and death, without sickness, uncompounded, unafflicted, uncontaminated, peaceful, **the blissful absolute, pervading space**, matchless, **the ground that is nirvāṇa, pervading space**, without dust, free from dust, not hollow, complete actionlessness, **pervading space**, non-harming, non-opposition, pervading space, **the ground, pervading space**, with nothing **defiled** at all, immeasurable, supreme, perfect, the principal one, the best, the highest, unsurpassable, ascertained, not a possessor of destructible phenomena, limitless **in qualities and aspects**, not revealed **to consciousness**, profound, difficult to view **for consciousness**, not afflicted, the faultless kāyas, **primordially** pure, **primordially** perfected, **primordial, natural** goodness, free from all defects, free from the three poisons, **primordial, natural** cessation, abiding **without [fixated] dwelling**, the refuge **without** need of refuge, defense, intrepid, overcoming [any particular] place, **the ['other'] all ground consciousness**, not proud, abandonment of all that is essenceless, **dharmadhātu, absolute** virtue **pervading space**, absolute **reality**, motionless, **primordially and naturally** very supple, ultimate, unfabricated bliss, **primordial and natural** abandonment of the skandhas, annihilation of the path **pervading space, absolute** emptiness, **the ground that has primordially and naturally** exhausted craving, enlightenment **through the absolute**, inexhaustible nirvāṇa.

All these are liberation, the Tathāgata.

Each quality is taught with reasons clearly establishing why it is beyond the compounded. Consult this sūtra for the detailed teaching. Also, [Asaṅga's] *Summary of the Great Vehicle* says:

Natural, complete purity is like this. It is: suchness, **absolute** emptiness, the pure and true ultimate, the markless **dhātu**, and absolute **truth**.

Dharmadhātu is also like that. Due to being without **incidental** defilements, complete purity is like this: it is **naturally, completely pure** suchness that possesses no **incidental** obscurations.

According to the difference being taught between possessing the first and second kinds of purity, the second, [natural purity,] is even better than the first, [incidental purity.] Also, the glorious *Vajra Garland Tantra* says:

From all afflictions being¹⁰⁰⁶ completely conquered,
As dharmatā that pervades all phenomena,
The three realms, entirely pure and free from defilement
And the level of self-awareness **of the absolute**,
Having the nature of the original buddha,
Blossom as five-fold natural families.

And:

'Other'¹⁰⁰⁷ consciousness and dharmadhātu,
The absolute and **natural** great bliss,¹⁰⁰⁸
Complete liberation from [both] grasper and grasped,
Absolute bodhicitta without defilement,¹⁰⁰⁹
Vajrasattva, the **natural**, great peace,
Wondrous, non-dual, pure, true **pristine wisdom**,
Changeless bliss of the¹⁰¹⁰ fourth empowerment
Highest level of the fourth kind of joy.
By this and various other particular names,
The highest level,¹⁰¹¹ **pervading space**, is taught.

And:

Within the two-fold syllable EVAM,
E is taught as **non-empty** emptiness.¹⁰¹²
VAM is **absolute** compassion and means.
The drop arises as union of these two,¹⁰¹³
That is the wondrous, highest yogic union.
The buddhas utter the syllables EVAM
To teach at the beginning of the tantras,
By that **all**-summarizing Dharma seal,¹⁰¹⁴
Sealing with the seal of the great king.¹⁰¹⁵

And:

E is the secret dhātu of **absolute** space,

The bhaga, the source of dharmas, and the lotus,
 Upon¹⁰¹⁶ the lion throne of vajra yoga.
 Revealing what is supremely wonderful,
 Vajrasattva, the syllable VAM, and the vajra,
 Vajra Bhairava, and the vajra lord,
 Also named Heruka, and Kālacakra,
 Who is the primordial buddha, and so forth.¹⁰¹⁷

EVAM is the seal of the tathāgatas,
 Symbolizing non-dual means and prajñā.¹⁰¹⁸
 And inseparable, **absolute**, emptiness and compassion.

Also, the tantras within which that is uttered,
 Are **said to be** the mudrā of the Tathāgata,
 The symbol of non-dual pristine wisdom,¹⁰¹⁹
 Taught as an introduction to all tantras.

As an abbreviation of all tantras'
 Indivisible emptiness and compassion,
 Those [tantras] in which the expression of these syllables,
 That is, the two-fold syllables E and VAM,
 Do not occur are [tantras] without suchness.

Those who have thorough knowledge of these two,
 Like recognizing imitations of gold,
 Recognize wrong explanations of tantras,¹⁰²⁰
 And so abide in the action of [secret] mantra.¹⁰²¹
 Thus, such **tantras**¹⁰²² are purely and truly supreme.

Also, the *Oral Teachings of Mañjuśrī* says:

Thus, in the liturgies of meditation,
 On the suchness of all phenomena,
 With its measureless, perfect **qualities**,
 Observing that, the pure and true, arises.¹⁰²³
 The synonyms¹⁰²⁴ will now be fully taught.

Suchness and the pure and true ultimate,
 The dhātu that is inconceivable,
 Dharmatā, and also flawless Dharma,
 Emptiness **of other**, and markless **ground**,
 Wishlessness, and also the rejector
 Of the mechanism of affliction,
 The unarisen, and also the luminous,
Primordial, complete enlightenment,
 That which produces knowledge of others' minds,
 That which is the producer of divine ears,
 Bestower of the natural eye of the gods,
 Emanator of measureless miracles,
 Reaching ultimate actualities,
 Absolute truth, and the completion stage.¹⁰²⁵

Total cleanliness of the kāyas of purity,¹⁰²⁶
 That are relied on by all **noble ones**,
Natural, total purity, like space,
The essence, not covered by incidental defilements,
 Pure, primordial luminosity,¹⁰²⁷
 That cannot be destroyed by anything.

Such limitless aspects of its many names,
 Are things¹⁰²⁸ that have been taught in sūtras and tantras,
 And will be truly taught in future time.

Teach nothing else, now or in the future
 Besides this suchness **of the basic nature**.¹⁰²⁹

And:

Supreme lord¹⁰³⁰ Vajradhara,
 Yogin of completion,¹⁰³¹
 Who has done the deeds and actions,¹⁰³²
 Great lord, with a great burden,¹⁰³³
 Omniscient, undisturbed mind,
 All-knowing, heroic being,
 Tamer of the great elephant,¹⁰³⁴
 Gone¹⁰³⁵ beyond saṃsāra,
 Yoga of non-dual truth,
 Absolute and relative.¹⁰³⁶

Perfecting all paths, rejecting finality.¹⁰³⁷
Natural source of all-good qualities,¹⁰³⁸
 Suchness that is inclusive of everything,
 Body, and so forth,¹⁰³⁹ that hinder all **worldly** realms,¹⁰⁴⁰
 Unsurpassed in pure and true abiding.

Renowned as those, and so forth,¹⁰⁴¹
 All these limitless aspects of names,
 That refer to non-dual wisdom,¹⁰⁴²
 In all the sūtras and tantras,¹⁰⁴³
 Should be understood by the wise.¹⁰⁴⁴

Also, Vasubandhu's *Extensive Commentary on the Vast Mother* says:

Suchness, dharmadhātu,
 the pure and true ultimate,
 [Universal] equality,
 the inconceivable dhātu,
 As well as the motionless,
 Are included among the synonyms
 Of dharmadhātu, emptiness.

And:

Changeless, completely established phenomena, are **primordially**
and naturally world-transcending, unborn, unceasing, peace from

the beginning, natural nirvāṇa, pervading space, the essence or ground without real things, non-empty emptiness, and so forth.

Also, the *Sublime Continuum with Asaṅga's Commentary* says:

Now a stanza is composed about the indivisible reality of this completely pure occasion of ultimate, total, complete enlightenment, tathāgatagarbha:

Thus, that¹⁰⁴⁵ is 1. dharmakāya and 2. the Tathāgata.
3. The truth of the noble ones and 4. absolute nirvāṇa.¹⁰⁴⁶
Like the sun and its rays, these qualities are inseparable.
There is no nirvāṇa aside from buddhahood.

What does the first half of the verse teach?

In brief, the uncontaminated dhātu,¹⁰⁴⁷
Should be known by the divisions of meaning
Of the four synonyms that are taught above.
The dharmakāya, Tathāgata, and so forth.

Extensively there are limitless names, but in brief, the uncontaminated dhatu, Tathāgatagarbha, should be known in terms of the four synonymous names above and their four meanings. What are the four?

With its inseparable buddha qualities, dharmakāya,¹⁰⁴⁸
Attainment like the enlightened family,¹⁰⁴⁹ Tathāgata,
Absolute truth, dharmatā, without deception or falsity.
Primordial natural peace that is great nirvāṇa itself.

Also, the glorious *Guhyasamāja Tantra* says:

I am always paying homage with body, speech, and mind,
To the three times'¹⁰⁵⁰ vajra mind, all that is¹⁰⁵¹ and is ultimate,¹⁰⁵²
The peaceful, unobstructed, essence of pure space,¹⁰⁵³
All-victorious Buddha, enlightened lord with the vajra.¹⁰⁵⁴

Homage to that in which all form, and feeling,
Conceptualized perception, formations and consciousness,
The six sense sources and the powers of sense,
Earth and water, fire, air and space
Abide as vast simulacra¹⁰⁵⁵ of the mind of enlightenment.

There, and so forth, the many synonyms that exist are taught like the ground of emptiness, the absolute, sugatagarbha, the pure self, dharmadhātu, and the omnipresent.

Likewise, the noble one Lord of the World, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, says:

Non-dual, unbiased, and immovable,¹⁰⁵⁶
Desire and supreme, changeless, great desire,¹⁰⁵⁷
The ground in which there are neither things and non-things,¹⁰⁵⁸
Pristine wisdom and sattva¹⁰⁵⁹ Samantabhadra,

Absolute great afflictions, without afflictions.¹⁰⁶⁰
 Holding glorious drops of enlightened mind,¹⁰⁶¹
 The glorious, intrinsic Kālacakra vajra,
 Yoga with the nature of prajñā and means.¹⁰⁶²

And:

EVAM alone is not the name for the meaning of this profound continuity of the mantra of absolute truth. There are many names for that one reality. Since there are these many names, there is not just a single principal name. All these names produce understanding of the same unique reality. For example, among words for women like “indispensable,” “human female,” and “little lady,”¹⁰⁶³ “indispensable” alone is not the principal name, because all of them produce understanding of the same thing, a person with breasts and long hair.

Similarly, among E, pervading space, the secret, the lotus, source of dharmas, absolute space of the dhātu, realm of great bliss, lion throne, bhaga, and secret; E alone is not the principal name, because they all produce understanding of emptiness [capable of manifesting] all aspects.

Similarly, among the names VAM pervading space, great bliss pervading space, the great desire, the innate nature, supreme changelessness, bindu, suchness, self-arising pristine wisdom, and completely pure mind pervading space; VAM alone is not the principal one, because all of them produce understanding of mahāmudrā, innate joy, and changeless bliss, pervading space.

Similarly, [the two syllables E and VAM together as] EVAM [produce] understanding of the reality pervading space of emptiness possessing the supreme of all aspects, pervading space, compassion without phenomena as a reference point, and inseparable, absolute bodhicitta.

Yogins should realize the unbiased, non-dual yogic union of prajñā and skillful means through many names like EVAM pervading space, Vajrasattva, [absolute] bodhicitta, enlightened mind, Kālacakra, the first buddha pervading space, the nature of prajñā and skillful means, union, ‘other’ awareness, the nature of ‘other’ knowables, inseparable [from the essence,] non-dual bliss and emptiness, the beginningless and endless, peace pervading space, the Secret Assembly,¹⁰⁶⁴ the binder of the cakras,¹⁰⁶⁵ Hevajra, Mahāmāyā, the Four Vajra Seats, Vajra Ḍākinī, Vajra Amṛita, Vajra Bhairava, and Vajra HŪṃkāra.

And:

Similarly, there are names known from the treatises, like “the three occasioned” for the gods,¹⁰⁶⁶ multiple terms from various linguistic regions;¹⁰⁶⁷ and names consisting of mantra syllables, like KĀ LA

CA KRA and ŚRĪ for non-dual pristine wisdom; and names consisting of individual syllables by which particular realities are definitively taught by the Tathāgata in one or another tantra and then written down by those who compile such teachings.

Yogins should realize all these in terms of provisional and definitive meaning. In these teachings, for one topic, there may be a variety of names referring to real things and non-things, so that one reality is taught by various names. Yogins should not form a preconception that different names necessarily refer to different objects. Rely on the meaning, thoroughly examining according to the instructions of an authentic guru, who teaches their one taste as sugatagarbha, like well-assaying gold for purity.

Also, it says in praise of these correct teachings:

Most excellent speaker, in your Word,
There are many synonyms,
And also, many repetitions,
Understood in a unified way.

These terms are set forth in many, nay a great many, completely correct, sūtras, tantras, and treatises, the ground of emptiness, omnipresent dharmadhātu, the profound ultimate way things are, using many different names like those of deities, maṇḍalas, syllables, and scepters. Therefore, I will not write describing completely all the aspects of the immeasurable qualities to be abandoned and realized, with their extremely numerous different names in one or another teaching, fearing that too many words would be needed.

These names can be understood just from the reasoning and instructions above. Nevertheless, to apprehend how the meaning of many names and the essence of many aspects has the one taste of profound dharmatā, you should extensively consult other texts of the immaculate textual tradition of the definitive meaning. Then you should extensively, fully, and correctly teach [that tradition] to others who are suitable vessels.

2'. The Purposes of These Synonyms

The Buddha teaching these many synonymous names with one meaning had eight purposes, according to Vasubandhu's *Principles of Explanation*:

What are the purposes here? The purposes are eight in number. The synonyms are taught for different kinds of students:

1. To teach so that some will understand what is taught in this life and some in later lives.
2. To teach the meaning through synonyms, so that those who are distracted in this life will not be disparaged by others, because they will not ascertain what is said, if [only one word for the] meaning is expressed.

3. To correctly characterize the meaning again and again, so that those whose minds are not retentive will not forget it.
4. To clear away misconceptions of other meanings, since many names for one meaning occur.
5. So that, in other **cases** where these [different] names are used, their one meaning may be correctly established.¹⁰⁶⁸
6. To establish skillful means so that those who study how words should be put together, and those who explain the Dharma, may put together a [coherent] explanation of the meaning that will be properly understood [by hearers.]
7. To teach that **the buddhas themselves** have mastered correct knowledge of individual phenomena.
8. So that seeds of understanding the meaning may be produced in other students.

All those who explain something make students understand by using synonyms. Therefore, explanations **using many synonymous names** have no fault in their repetition.

(c). **The Way of Establishing the Absolute, by Correctly Teaching That the Objects from the Forms of Dharmatā to Omniscience are Other than Empty of Themselves**

1'. **Brief Correct Teaching of the Forms of Dharmatā, and So Forth**

As presented above, the ground of emptiness, suchness, with its many synonyms, is the ground primordially empty and purely devoid of all incidental phenomena. The teaching of the three kinds of forms, and so forth that correspond to the three natures was also presented. From those three, the forms, and so forth, of perfectly established dharmatā that transcend the three realms and the three times are primordially, completely pure, [absolute] phenomena. They are the ultimately attained phenomena of buddhahood from form to omniscience. The glorious *Hevajra Tantra* says:

For all things that are ascertained,
Their purity is called "suchness."¹⁰⁶⁹
By later distinguishing each,
They are said to be pure deities.¹⁰⁷⁰

With a similar **meaning**, the exalted protector Maitreya says in the *Ornament of Complete Realization*:

The purity of the fruition **from incidental defilements**
Is the same as the purity of forms and so on,
These two **purities** are not different; that being so,
Since they cannot be sundered, they are both said to be pure.¹⁰⁷¹

That is, the ground that has both the first and second purities is the single essence, as the *Mother of the Victorious Ones* also says:

Subhūti, the complete, primordial, and natural purity of form of the truth of cessation is the complete, primordial, and natural purity of the fruition that is free from incidental defilements.

The same is said about all the other aspects of the truth of cessation, up to omniscience. Also:

The complete, primordial, and natural purity of form of the truth of cessation is the complete, primordial, and natural purity of the perfection of prajñā of the truth of cessation. Since that is so, the complete, primordial, and natural purity of form of the truth of cessation and the complete, primordial, and natural purity of the perfection of prajñā of the truth of cessation are not two. They cannot be made two. They are not separate and not different.

The same is said, in the same way, about the subsequent aspects of the truth of cessation up to omniscience. Also:

The complete, primordial, and natural purity of self of the truth of cessation is the complete, primordial, and natural purity of the perfection of sentient beings of the truth of cessation, and of life, and of a living being, and of an individual, and of a power-having being, and of powerful self, and of an actor, and of a feeler, and of a knower, and the complete, primordial, and natural complete purity of a seer of the truth of cessation is also the complete, primordial, and natural purity of form.

The same is said about all the subsequent aspects of the truth of cessation up to omniscience. Also:

The complete, primordial, and natural purity and total purity of desire, aversion, and stupidity¹⁰⁷² is the complete, primordial, and natural purity of form, and so forth, up to omniscience.

So, in the extensive teaching, each aspect is individually joined, and:

Because of the complete, primordial, and natural purity of ignorance, formations are primordial and naturally completely pure. Because of the complete, primordial, and natural purity of formations, ignorance is primordial and naturally completely pure...

So, from form to omniscience, the later is said to be pure because of the purity of the earlier, and the earlier is said to be pure because of the purity of the later. Similarly:

Because the perfection of prajñā is primordially and naturally completely pure, form is primordially and naturally completely pure. Because form is primordially and naturally completely pure, knowledge of all aspects is primordially and naturally completely pure. Thus,...

This is joined up to feeling conditioned by contact, in the collected factors of the mental, [sense power, sense object, and sense consciousness.]¹⁰⁷³
Similarly:

Since the factors from the perfection of meditative concentration, and so forth, up to omniscience are **primordially and naturally** completely pure, those factors from form to feeling conditioned by contact, within the collected factors of the mental, are **primordially and naturally** completely pure. Because of the purity of feeling conditioned by contact, within the collected factors of the mental, knowledge of all aspects is **primordially and naturally** completely pure. Thus,...

This is extensively joined to all the individual factors. Similarly:

Because, knowledge of all aspects is **primordially and naturally** completely pure, form is **primordially and naturally** completely pure. Because form is **primordially and naturally** completely pure, the perfection of prajñā is **primordially and naturally** completely pure. Thus...

This is extensively joined up to the individual factors up to feeling conditioned by contact in the collected factors of the mental, and up to the perfection of generosity. Moreover:

Because compounded phenomena are **primordially and naturally** completely pure, uncompounded phenomena are **primordially and naturally** completely pure. Thus, the complete, primordial, and natural **purity** of compounded phenomena and the complete, primordial, and natural **purity** of uncompounded phenomena are not two and cannot be made two. They are not separate individuals and not different.

And:

Because of the purity of the past, the future and present are pure.

And:

Because of the purity of the future, the past and present are pure.

And:

Because of the purity of the present, the past and future are pure.

And:

Because form is **primordially and naturally** completely pure, complete purity is profound,

and so forth up to omniscience. And:

Because the perfection of prajñā is **primordially and naturally** completely pure, complete purity illuminates,

joining the factors from the perfection of meditative concentration to omniscience. Also:

Because form is without transference and joining of gaps,¹⁰⁷⁴ it is completely pure,

and so on, joining the factors up to omniscience. Also:

Because form is naturally luminous, the omnipresent afflictive emotions are **primordially and naturally non-existent**,

and so forth, joining the factors up to omniscience. Also:

Because form with objects to be attained and objects to be realized in experience **that have an essence separate from the attainer and realizer** does not exist, form is completely pure,

and so forth joining the factors up to omniscience. Also:

Because **relative** form is primordially and naturally unestablished in experience **of the absolute ground, form** is completely pure,

and so forth joining the factors up to **relative** omniscience. Then the Buddha speaks further, saying:

Subhūti, because **the ground is** primordially and naturally completely pure, and because selfhood **of individuals and phenomena is primordially and naturally non-existent; the ground in which relative** form is **primordially and naturally non-existent** is utterly, completely pure....

This is taught very extensively. There are two kinds of purity: 1) natural, primordial purity **that does not depend on the path** and 2) purity from incidental defilements that is **created by the path**.

What natural primordial purity is pure from is the forms, and so forth, of the relative, within the imagined and the dependent [natures]. These [relative] phenomena never existed at all in the fundamental way things are, **even as mere appearance. [That is because the defining characteristics that they project onto mere appearance are contradictory,] like the child of a barren woman.**¹⁰⁷⁵ [However,] grounds that are pure of those [relative forms are the mere appearances, without projection of contradictory concepts, that are] forms of absolute dharmatā, and so forth. These are never non-existent. Whether relative tathāgatas arrive in the world or not, or whether transmigrating beings realize these [absolute phenomena] or not, these completely pure forms of absolute dharmatā, and so forth, always abide as the assembly of deities of pristine wisdom **pervading space**.

2'. **Extensive Explanation Joining These [Pure Forms, and So Forth,] with Mantra**

a'. **How the Completely Pure Five Skandhas of Dharmatā**

Eternally Abide as the Five Victorious Ones and the Five Pristine Wisdoms

The **primordially, naturally**, completely pure form skandha **pervading space**, is the absolute pristine wisdom deity Vairocana and the mirror-like pristine wisdom.

Since abandonment and realization are naturally complete in dharmatā, and since the two accumulations are primordially and naturally complete in dharmatā that exists as the fundamental way things are, this is the first buddha who always pervades everything.

However, this [first buddha] is not attained by those in whom the winds and mind are not stopped. T[herefore, to attain it,] the continuity of wind and mind must be definitely stopped. One should be similarly mindful of that regarding the later ['other'] skandhas, deities and pristine wisdoms.

The **primordially and naturally** pure skandhas of feeling, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness are also deities of self-arising, absolute pristine wisdom, **pervading space**. **Respectively**, 1) pure feeling is Ratnasambhava, the pristine wisdom of equality; 2) pure conceptualized perception is Amitābha, the pristine wisdom of discriminating awareness; 3) pure formations are Amoghasiddhi, the pristine wisdom of accomplishing action; and 4) pure consciousness is Akṣobhya, the pristine wisdom of utterly, completely pure dharmadhātu.

Also, **the Hevajra [Tantra]** says:

The¹⁰⁷⁶~~1077~~ skandha of form is Vajrī.
 Feeling is Pāṇḍaravāsīnī.
 Perception is Water Yoginī.
 Formations are Vajra Ḍākinī.
 The yoginī of selflessness¹⁰⁷⁸
 Abides as the consciousness skandha.

The meaning is like the above. **These deities are also taught to be the holders of the five completely pure skandhas in *Expressing the Names of Mañjuśrī*.**

b'. **How the Sense Powers of Completely Pure Dharmatā Abide as Absolute Bodhisattvas**

The primordially and naturally completely pure sense powers are also absolute pristine wisdom bodhisattvas, with their non-dual consort-goddesses. **These are** as follows: 1) eye, Kṣitigarbha, Stupidity Vajrī; 2) ear, Vajrapāṇi, Aversion Vajrī; 3) nose, Akāśagarbha, Greed Vajrī; 4) tongue, the Lord of the World OR Avalokiteśvara, Desire Vajrī; 5) body, Nīvaraṇaviṣkambin, Jealousy Vajrī; and 6) mental sense, Samantabhadra, the yoginī of selflessness.

c'. **How the Completely Pure Six Sense Objects of Dharmatā**

Abide as Absolute Female Bodhisattvas

Similarly, the **primordially and naturally** completely pure sense constituents are Vajrīs, as follows: 1) forms, Forms Vajrī; 2) sounds, Sounds Vajrī; 3) odors, Smells Vajrī; 4) tastes, Tastes Vajrī; 5) touchables, Touchables Vajrī; and 6) phenomena,¹⁰⁷⁹ Phenomena Constituent Vajrī.¹⁰⁸⁰

[Though the deities are different,] the meaning regarding the absolute constituents is the same in the following: 1) forms are Pāṇḍaravāsīnī; 2) sounds are famed as Chaurī;¹⁰⁸¹ 3) the aspect of smells is Vetāli;¹⁰⁸² 4) tastes are well-known as Ghasmarī;¹⁰⁸³ 5) tangibles are called Ācārī;¹⁰⁸⁴ and 6) mental dharmas¹⁰⁸⁵ are Khecarī.¹⁰⁸⁶

d'. **How the Thirty-Six Classes of Absolute Phenomena of Completely Pure Dharmatā Abide as Absolute Victorious Ones**

The six vajra sense powers are multiplied by the six ‘other’ vajra sense consciousnesses, [making thirty-six.] The **primordially and naturally** pure six consciousnesses of the eye, and so forth, are:

1. Kṣitigarbha Akṣobhya,
2. Vajrapāṇi Akṣobhya,
3. Akāśagarbha Akṣobhya,
4. Avalokiteśvara Akṣobhya,
5. Nīvaraṇaviṣkambin Akṣobhya,
6. Samantabhadra Akṣobhya.

The six ‘other’ contacts, the contact of the eye collection,¹⁰⁸⁷ that is **primordially and naturally** completely pure, and so forth,¹⁰⁸⁸ are included within the absolute skandha of formations. The six corresponding relative contacts are included in the relative skandha of formations.

The six kinds of **primordially and naturally** completely pure feelings conditioned by contact associated with the eye collection, and so forth, are:

7. Kṣitigarbha Ratnasambhava,
8. Vajrapāṇi Ratnasambhava,
9. Akāśagarbha Ratnasambhava,
10. Avalokiteśvara Ratnasambhava,
11. Nīvaraṇaviṣkambin Ratnasambhava,
12. Samantabhadra Ratnasambhava.

Those six are [included in] the ‘other’ or vajra feeling skandha. The blessed emanation of the Lord of the World, Avalokiteśvara, [Kalkī Puṇḍarīka,] says:

The divisions, or transformations,¹⁰⁸⁹ of the six absolute skandhas multiplied by the six sense powers are thirty-six. The six of the consciousness skandha are multiplied by the six powers of sense, the ear power, and so forth. The same is true for the [other five] absolute skandhas, formations, feelings, conceptualized perception,

form, and pristine wisdom.

Thus, thirty-six absolute skandhas of dharmatā are taught that are ‘other’ than the skandhas of outer and inner relative phenomena. [Within these,] the essentially pure conditioned perceptions of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mental sense. These are:

13. Kṣitigarbha Amitābha,
14. Vajrapāṇi Amitābha,
15. Akāśagarbha Amitābha,
16. Avalokiteśvara Amitābha,
17. Nīvaraṇaviṣkambin Amitābha, and
18. Samantabhadra Amitābha.

These are the ‘other’ or vajra conceptualized perception skandha. Similarly, there are the essentially pure formations of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mental sense. These are:

19. Kṣitigarbha Amoghasiddhi,
20. Vajrapāṇi Amoghasiddhi,
21. Akāśagarbha Amoghasiddhi,
22. Avalokiteśvara Amoghasiddhi,
23. Nīvaraṇaviṣkambin Amoghasiddhi,
24. Samantabhadra Amoghasiddhi.

These are the ‘other’ or vajra formations skandha. Similarly, there are the essentially pure forms of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mental sense. These are:

25. Kṣitigarbha Vairocana,
26. Vajrapāṇi Vairocana,
27. Akāśagarbha Vairocana,
28. Avalokiteśvara Vairocana,
29. Nīvaraṇaviṣkambin Vairocana,
30. Samantabhadra Vairocana.

These are the ‘other’ or vajra form skandha. Similarly, there are the essentially pure pristine wisdoms of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mental sense. These are:

31. Kṣitigarbha Vajrasattva,
32. Vajrapāṇi Vajrasattva,
33. Akāśagarbha Vajrasattva,
34. Avalokiteśvara Vajrasattva,
35. Nīvaraṇaviṣkambin Vajrasattva,
36. Samantabhadra Vajrasattva.

These are the ‘other’ or vajra pristine wisdom skandha. That is how the primordially completely pure six conditioned perceptions, formations, forms, and pristine wisdoms are taught in one or another scripture.

This section was an additional spelling out of the details.

e'. **How the Completely Pure Six Constituents are the Six Absolute Female Tathāgatas**

Now, let us go back to our earlier topics. Corresponding to the primordially, naturally complete pure element of 1) earth is Buddhhalocanā, 2) water is Māmakī, 3) fire is Pāṇḍaravāsīnī, 4) air is Tārā, 5) space is Vajradhātviśvarī, and 6) consciousness is Viśvamātā.

Regarding the first four of these **primordially pure** elements, the *Hevajra Tantra* says:

Earth is said to be Pukkasī,¹⁰⁹⁰
 The water element Śavarī,¹⁰⁹¹
 Fire is known as Caṇḍalī,¹⁰⁹²
 Wind is well-known as Ḍombī¹⁰⁹³

That has the same meaning as the above. The [absolute] ground is **primordially and naturally** empty of the skandhas, sense constituents, and so forth, of the imagined and dependent. However, the skandhas, sense constituents, and so forth, of perfectly established dharmatā are primordially and completely pure. absolute skandhas and sense constituents. These are also among the absolute assembly of deities of self-arising pristine wisdom.

f'. **How Dharmatā's Twelve Links of Interdependent Origination Abide as the Twelve Absolute Grounds, True Meanings, and So Forth**

Relative ignorance, and so forth, [the twelve links of interdependent origination] belonging to the imagined and dependent, are also [revealed as] the twelve, **from 'other' ignorance to 'other' aging and death**, of the primordially and naturally pure ground, absolute dharmatā.

As such, they are revealed as twelve aspects of the true meaning, **the twelve absolute levels, the twelve realms, and so forth. These are the essences of the four kāyas, as the qualities of the four vajras, with [three faces each, making] twelve faces in all, and so forth.** The *Stainless Light* says:

These twelve truths are **'other'**¹⁰⁹⁴ 1) ignorance, 2) formations, 3) consciousness, 4) name and form, 5) the six sense sources, 6) contact, 7) feeling, 8) craving, 9) clinging, 10) becoming, 11) birth, and 12) aging and death.

For womb-born **and other sentient** beings,¹⁰⁹⁵ **these** twelve true meanings are obscured; but for the buddhas, they are free from obscuration. Because the life-wind¹⁰⁹⁶ moves in womb-born beings, and so forth, according to the twelve transformations of the life-wind, **the resulting motility of consciousness, obscures the twelve true meanings pervading space, with their single purity.**

Since, by stopping the winds of the twelve transformations, the

saṃsāric twelve limbs [of interdependent origination] are also stopped, the twelve true meanings pervading space, with their single [absolute] purity are free from obscuration.

There it says that the essences of the twelve aspects of true meaning abide without difference, like space, in buddhas and sentient beings. However, by the transformations of winds in the twelve temporal conjunctions being stopped and not stopped respectively, freedom from incidental obscurations is attained by buddhas and not attained by sentient beings. That difference is taught there and also in *Expression of the Absolute Names of Mañjuśrī*:

Having removed¹⁰⁹⁷ the twelve links that are the root of saṃsāra,
One holds the twelve aspects of the pure, primordial ground.

Also:

Possessing the twelve aspects of the true meaning,...

The *Stainless Light* says:

Thus, the three **primordially pure**¹⁰⁹⁸ qualities¹⁰⁹⁹ in the pristine wisdom vajra are ignorance, formations, and consciousness.
Those in the body vajra are name and form, the six sense sources, and contact.

Those in the speech vajra are feeling, craving, and grasping.

Those in the mind vajra are becoming, birth, and aging and death.

Thus, in the **primordially pure** form of bindu¹¹⁰⁰ there are four vajras with three qualities or “faces” each. In terms of those, there are twelve aspects [in all].

Thus, the producer, [in terms of true being,] and not in terms of relative causation, of primordially pure ignorance, with the rest of the twelve true meanings pervading space, is the supreme, bliss-producing, fourth vajra of pristine wisdom. That is also the birthplace of **primordially pure** mantras.

All the twelve limbs [of interdependent origination,] as the twelve [aspects of] the true meaning, are aspects of the **primordially pure** body, speech, mind, and pristine wisdom vajras. That is a definitive teaching of the Blessed One, and so their changing into anything else is not possible.

Thus, the [twelve] qualities, ignorance, and so forth that [are “faces”] of the primordially pure four vajras, are the twelve aspects of the true meaning. These are also taught to be the birthplace of absolute mantras.

These twelve qualities should be understood to have the same meaning as “completely pure ignorance, and so forth.” As relative ignorance, and so forth, are incidental defilements, they cannot be the **primordially pure**

aspects of the definitive meaning. Nor can [dualistic] consciousness of them or their respective emptiness of themselves. The glorious *Binding of the Six Cakras* teaches this extensively:

By the cessation of the twelve [relative] links,¹¹⁰¹
 The temporal conjunctions¹¹⁰² do not occur.¹¹⁰³
 Then they are wellknown¹¹⁰⁴ to be the twelve levels,¹¹⁰⁵
 The absolute “places,” the sub-places, and the rest.¹¹⁰⁶

Enumerating these twelve kinds of meeting places that correspond to the twelve levels, the glorious *Hevajra* says:

There are the places and sub-places,¹¹⁰⁷
 The fields and sub-fields,¹¹⁰⁸
 The garlands and sub-garlands,¹¹⁰⁹
 The gatherings and sub-gatherings,¹¹¹⁰
 The pīlava and upapīlava¹¹¹¹
 And charnel grounds and sub-charnel grounds.¹¹¹²

The usual order of the charnel grounds and pīlava is reversed here to teach reliance on a holy guru possessing the oral instructions of the root tantra. Also, the *Tantra of the Supreme First Buddha* says:

By cessation¹¹¹³ of the twelve links of saṃsāra,
 There are the twelve gates of the maṇḍala palace.¹¹¹⁴
 Likewise, by twelve levels of the absolute,
 The archways on those gates¹¹¹⁵ are beautified.

Because that is taught, knowing the twelve links according to the divisions of the two truths, you should know what [relative] phenomenon is primordially non-existent in what [ground], so that the second is pure of the first. You should also know the reality of the twelve links that are fully and completely pure in the primordially pure absolute ground.

In the *Hundred Thousand Stanza Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra*, the good ignorance, and so forth, of the uncompounded twelve links are extensively taught, as are their absence of afflictive emotions, contaminations, and faults in world-transcending, complete purity. The teachings of the Middle Length Mother accord with these points. The *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* teachings of uncompounded interdependent arising have the intention of ‘other,’ supreme interdependent arising beyond the relative. They should be known to refer to the ‘other’ interdependence of the absolute that is empty of other.

g'. **How the Completely Pure Ten Perfections Abide as the Absolute Śaktis, Vidyās, Dākinīs, and Mudrā Consorts**

If you know how the divisions of the three natures and the two truths apply to the [ten] perfections, generosity, and so forth, you will not be confused about the Sage’s Word. The ten perfections included within the

empty objects of the imagined and the dependent, and within the truth of the path, are relative and compounded. They are not established within the fundamental way things are.

However, the [‘other’] perfection of generosity, and so forth are included within perfectly established dharmatā, the primordially completely pure ground of these [relative] phenomena. These are [sets of ten] absolute pristine wisdom deities, like the ten śāktis and the ten dākinīs, **pervading space**. These deities are also taught to be six, three, and one mudrā consorts,¹¹¹⁸ ten ultimate mudrā consorts in all. You should know the meaning of the ten perfections of giving, and so forth, of dharmatā to be these naturally self-existing deities.

h'. **How All the Completely Pure Kinds of Emptiness Abide as Absolute Deities, Compassion, and Great Bliss**

1''. **Resolving All the Different Kinds of Emptiness Well as Emptiness of Self and Emptiness of Other**

Similarly, the eighteen and twenty kinds of emptiness are included in the sixteen taught by the victorious Maitreya in *Discrimination of the Middle and the Extremes*:

There is emptiness of the enjoyer and the enjoyed,¹¹¹⁹
The body of those, and the ground that is the place,
That by which these are seen, and how they are seen,
Which is also that in terms of which they are empty.

In order to attain the two-fold virtues,¹¹²⁰
In order always to benefit sentient beings,
In order not to abandon cyclic existence,
In order that virtue may not be exhausted,

In order to purify the enlightened family,
In order to gain the major and minor marks,
And in order to purify buddha qualities,
The practice of bodhisattvas is performed.

In what is taught there:

1. Emptiness of the enjoyer is emptiness of the inner sense sources, the six sense consciousnesses, since these are the enjoyers of objects.
2. Emptiness of the enjoyed is emptiness of the outer sense sources, the six [sense objects,] since these are the objects enjoyed.
3. The body is the place in which enjoyer and enjoyed abide. Thus, emptiness of the body is emptiness inner and outer [enjoyer and enjoyed within it.]
4. Emptiness of the great, the vast vessel that is the external world, is emptiness of “the ground that is the place.”

5. That by which these emptiness of the inner sense sources, and so forth, are seen is the knower of emptiness. Emptiness of that knower is called “emptiness of emptiness.” This is taught to be emptiness of the realizer of emptiness. Other explanations, *like emptiness of emptiness itself*, are not the intention of the victorious ones.

6. How these different kinds of emptiness are seen is that they are seen in relation to the absolute, [by whose criteria they are empty.] Their emptiness of that is emptiness of the absolute.

7-8. That for which bodhisattvas perform their practice is also emptiness. This has eight aspects. In particular, since two kinds of virtue compounded and uncompounded virtue are to be attained, bodhisattvas practice for their sake. Thus, there is emptiness of both the compounded and the uncompounded.

9. Bodhisattvas always practice to benefit sentient beings. Here there is emptiness of the limitless *benefits* they perform.

10. Bodhisattvas practice so that [beginningless and endless] saṃsāra may not be abandoned. Emptiness of saṃsāra is emptiness of the beginningless and endless.

11. Bodhisattvas practice so that virtue may not be exhausted. Emptiness of that is emptiness of the non-rejected *virtue they practice*.

12. Bodhisattvas practice in order to purify [defects from] the naturally existing enlightened family. Emptiness of that [sole, true nature] is emptiness of nature.

13. Bodhisattvas practice to gain the major and minor marks. Emptiness of these marks is emptiness of intrinsic characteristics.¹¹²¹ That is taught *by Vajradhara* in the glorious Pure and True Union Tantra. Explanations of this kind of emptiness as emptiness of compounded characteristics, *like arising*, do not accord with the intention of the Victorious One.¹¹²²

14. Bodhisattvas practice for attaining all the phenomena of buddhahood, like the ten powers and four fearlessnesses that are primordially pure of incidental defilements. Emptiness of these is emptiness of all phenomena.

The first four, emptiness of the enjoyer, and so forth, are concerned with the things that are known. The fifth is concerned with the seer of things that are known. The sixth is concerned with how these things are seen by the seer or knower of emptiness and the absolute. The seventh through fourteenth kinds of emptiness are concerned with what bodhisattvas practice for, [as listed above.]

Having presented each of these fourteen kinds of emptiness, the same text explains in what sense they have the meaning or characteristic of emptiness:

There is emptiness of individuals

And emptiness of phenomena that are unreal.
 There is another kind of emptiness
 Of realities having those unrealities.

15. Regarding that stanza, all things that are either [relative] individuals or [conceptualized] phenomena [experienced by them are unreal things that] do not exist at all. They are not established in the fundamental way things are. Therefore, each of them is empty of its own essence. These things appear in neither 1) awareness of emptiness of the relative, nor in 2) awareness of the fundamental way things are.

The ground empty of these phenomena, the ever-abiding essence, dharmatā, is not empty of itself; but it is empty of all incidental phenomena. It is the absolute that is empty of phenomena other than itself. It is accompanied by appearance within awareness of the fundamental way things are.

This fifteenth kind of emptiness, emptiness of unreal things is the meaning of the frequently taught assertion, “When something does not exist in something, the second is empty of the first.” [Unreal things are empty of their own essence.] Emptiness of phenomena of their own essence in the relative is emptiness of self, **empty emptiness, nihilistic emptiness, non-universal emptiness, and emptiness related to the relative.**

16. The emptiness that is the essence of unreal things, is the meaning of the frequently taught assertion, “What remains there, that always exists.” This emptiness of other real things [of the relative] within the absolute is **non-empty emptiness, emptiness possessing the supreme of all aspects, universal emptiness, and emptiness unrelated to the relative.**

These points are also taught in the king of tantras, the glorious Saṃputa Subsequent Tantra. Vasubandhu’s commentary on *Discriminating the Middle and the Extremes* teaches these different kinds of emptiness **somewhat differently than what the Buddha teaches in the Saṃputa:**

1) Emptiness of the enjoyer is emptiness of the inner sense sources.
 2) Emptiness of the enjoyed is emptiness of external objects. 3) The body is the place that is the container of both enjoyer and enjoyed. Their emptiness is called “emptiness of outer and inner.” 4) The ground that is the place of the body is the vessel that is the world. Since it is vast, its emptiness is called “emptiness of the great.” 5) By what is the emptiness of the inner sense sources, and so forth, seen? It is **seen** by a knower of emptiness. Emptiness of that knower is called “emptiness of emptiness.” 6) How these empty phenomena are seen is as aspects of the absolute. Emptiness of that is called “emptiness of the absolute.”

There is also emptiness of **eight** things that bodhisattvas practice for. What do they practice for? **The Blessed One says in the tantras that** they practice for the sake of two kinds of virtue that are to be attained. The two kinds of virtue are 7) compounded and 8)

uncompounded. 9) “In order always to benefit sentient beings” means in order to benefit sentient beings at all times. 10) “In order not to leave saṃsāra behind” means that if beginningless and endless saṃsāra is not seen as empty, one will not be discouraged and will not completely forsake [beings in] saṃsāra. 11) “So that virtue may not be exhausted,” means that even if one is enlightened, without remainder of the skandhas,¹¹²³ virtue will not be left behind and rejected. 12) In “So that the enlightened family may be purified,” “enlightened family” means the natural **enlightened family, the kāya of the essence, svābhavikakāya**, being purified [of incidental defilements.] 13) “So that the major and minor marks may be attained,” means so that the major and minor marks of a great being may be attained. 14) “Bodhisattvas practice in order to purify the phenomena of buddhahood” refers to the absolute powers, fearlessnesses, unshared phenomena, and so forth, of a buddha [being purified of incidental defilements.]

Thus, as a start, the presentation of these fourteen kinds of emptiness should be known. What are the meanings of these emptinesses?

There is emptiness of individuals
And of phenomena that are unreal.
There is another kind of emptiness
Of realities that have those unrealities.

Individuals and ... phenomena that are unreal is the emptiness of **unreal things, emptiness of self, and empty emptiness**. The existence of **the ground or essence** of that unreality is emptiness that is their emptiness **within the essence of unreal things and their essences. That is emptiness of other, and non-empty emptiness**. “Emptiness of the enjoyer,” and so forth, were taught above to teach the characteristics of [relative] emptiness. Two kinds of emptiness are posited in the end, 1) emptiness of [relative,] unreal things, and 2) emptiness that is the [absolute] essence of unreal things.

This presentation is as elsewhere in the tantras. These two kinds of emptiness were taught 1) in order to clear away exaggerated assertions of the existence of individuals and describable phenomena and 2) in order to clear away deprecations denying the existence **of the ground** of their emptiness **respectively**. That is how the divisions of emptiness should be known.

Just after that passage, the divisions of emptiness that are clearly taught by the Buddha in the *Saṃpuṭa Tantra* are established by Maitreya in the root text, as they are by the very capable exponent of the Middle Way Master Vasubandhu, in his *Commentary on Discrimination of the Middle and Extremes*:

To present that as it is, it is like this: How should practice be understood? Regarding absolute emptiness, sugatagarbha:

If it did not have the afflictive emotions,
 All embodied beings would be liberated.
 If it could not be completely purified,
 Effort to do so would be without fruition.

If emptiness of [relative] phenomena were not completely afflicted with self-perpetuating afflictive emotions, then, even without antidotes being applied, there would be no [obstructing] afflictive emotions at all. Since there would be no afflictive emotions, all sentient beings would be liberated without effort.

If emptiness of [relative] phenomena could not be purified [of afflictive emotions by any means,] then, even though antidotes were applied, effort to attain liberation would be fruitless. Thus:

Neither afflicted nor non-afflicted,
 It is not pure nor is it impure.

How is [sugatagarbha] non-afflicted and not impure? Because mind is by nature luminous. How is [sugatagarbha] non-afflicted and not pure? Because of incidental defilements. By those words, the divisions of emptiness that were taught are established.

Referring to the tantras and the Sanskrit text of *Discrimination of the Middle and Extremes with its Commentary*, some like the translator Drokmi say that this passage does not seem to be correctly translated. If this translation is criticized, relying on what they say, this translation is from the edition of Paro, Bhutan.

The non-dual ultimate of Greater Madhyamaka was well taught in the profound Annuttara Yoga Tantras by glorious great Vajradhara. Do not accept the widely accepted aspersion of ill repute that *Discrimination of the Middle and Extremes* is a text of Mind-only.¹¹²⁴ This same approach of non-dual [suchness] transcending concepts is taught in very many texts of the Madhyamaka tradition, the exalted *Aṅgulimāla Sūtra*, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, the *Sublime Continuum with its Commentary*, Vasubandhu's *Great Commentary on the Mother*, and so forth.

For example, *Discrimination of the Middle and Extremes* says that the defining characteristics of emptiness are the same of those of suchness, and so forth:

Non-existence of dualistic realities, and the reality
 Of unreality, are the characteristics of emptiness.¹¹²⁵

These words are saying that the defining criteria of the kind of emptiness that is the absolute is being 1) the existent, established, non-dual, non-conceptual ground or essence, **pervading space**, in which 2) dualistic, [conceptualized] entities of the grasper and grasped, and so forth, are forever non-existent and unestablished.

This kind of emptiness has the same meaning as dharmadhātu, and so forth. It is also called “the emptiness of the essence of unreal things,” “emptiness of ‘other’ real things,” and “non-empty emptiness.”

Mere emptiness of self cannot do the job of this kind of [absolute] emptiness, which is taught again and again in the immaculate scriptures. Why not? Absolute emptiness, as the victorious Maitreya says, is “Not existent and not non-existent.” That **is saying that such** emptiness not only clears away extreme assertions of existence, but extreme assertions of non-existence as well. Self-emptiness [also clears away extreme assertions of existence, but does] not clear away extreme assertions of non-existence. [Therefore, it cannot do the job of this kind of emptiness.]

Extreme assertions of the existence of phenomena that are forever non-existent in the fundamental way of things are called “glorification.”¹¹²⁶

Extreme assertions of non-existence asserting that the partless, omnipresent, all-pervading, eternally-abiding pristine wisdom of dharmadhātu is non-existent, unestablished, and empty of its own essence is called “denigration.”

The middle free from these extremes is **a third alternative**, the ground free from all extreme dichotomies of existence and non-existence, exaggeration and deprecation, eternalism and nihilism, and so forth.

The ultimate, great Middle Way, is not [the mere void of] concretized, conceptual emptiness. It is the emptiness of self-arising, self-aware pristine wisdom. Such emptiness is far from nihilistic emptiness. That absolute, great emptiness is the absolute pristine wisdom of the noble ones, called by such names as: the changeless five topics of the great emptiness, the six changeless, empty drops, the syllable A, the supreme of all syllables, the buddha before all buddhas, the primordially liberated Tathāgata, the first buddha without a cause, and having all aspects and having none.

Unassailable, not rightly abandoned, and not to be deprecated; this is the inconceivable dhātu transcending the phenomena of consciousness, and transcending the sphere of logicians [that describes them.] However, it is known by the discriminating self-awareness of yogins.

[Since all assertions that some phenomenon exists fail to bear analysis for consistency and logical absolute truth, and therefore all phenomena are empty of themselves by those criteria,] some conclude the Middle Way is mere absence of assertions, so that even the middle is empty of the middle, and even the absolute is empty of the absolute, **and even dharmadhātu is empty of dharmadhātu.**

These [conclusions] are in extreme conflict with the intention of the Victorious One. The emptiness of [universal] unreality is insufficient to fulfill the characteristics of the emptiness of the ultimate way things are,

pervading space. Emptiness that is emptiness of the [real] essence of the unreal is required for that. Moreover, Vasubandhu's *Commentary on Discriminating the Middle and Extremes* says:

Thus, the ground or essence without the reality of two kinds of selfhood is taught to have the defining characteristics of absolute emptiness, pervading space. In the essence that is the ground or essence of the unreality of the two kinds of relative selfhood, the selfhood of the imagined and the dependent is not existent. However, the selfhood of perfectly established dharmatā is also not non-existent there.

In what sense is [the absolute a ground of] non-existence? Realities of the two selfhoods¹¹²⁷ are non-existent in it. In what sense is [the absolute] not non-existent? It is the real ground or essence of unreality of the two kinds of [unreal] selfhood. [By having those two characteristics,] the ground exists with the defining characteristics of absolute emptiness.

Also, Vasubandhu's *Commentary on the Extensive Mother, The Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra in Twenty-five Thousand Stanzas*, and *The Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra in Eighteen Thousand Stanzas* says:

Regarding "the essence of unreal things," imagined, relative phenomena of form, and so forth, are called "unreal things." The absolute essence opposed to those is called "the essence of unreal things."

After that, it is taught that the perfection of prajñā is also the essence of unreal things. Then skillful means is taught. Thus, the essence of unreal things is taught to be empty of all incidental assertions of the relative. The opposite of these is taught to be the absolute essence of reality [that is empty of them.] Then that essence is taught also to be perfection of prajñā, in which the ground and fruition are inseparable. From that, it follows that it is [both] absolute dharmatā [beyond conceptual description] and profound, describable¹¹²⁸ emptiness that is established as emptiness of other.¹¹²⁹ Similarly, the venerable noble one Nāgārjuna in his *Stages of Meditation on the Middle Way* says:

Unborn, absolute emptiness is one.¹¹³⁰
 The empty produced¹¹³¹ is similarly one.¹¹³²
 Unborn, absolute emptiness is supreme.¹¹³³
 The empty produced is what will be destroyed.¹¹³⁴

That is taught in accord with the words of the Blessed One in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*:

Arising and destruction are emptiness.
 Emptiness is arising and destruction.
 They are not anything that is other than that.
 That is not anything that is other than them.

That has the same meaning as the quote above it. When 17) emptiness of the unapprehendable and 18) emptiness of nature are added to the sixteen emptinesses discussed above, there are eighteen. By adding 19) emptiness of a thing of itself, and 20) emptiness of other things, there are twenty. The last two are also taught as emptiness of self and emptiness of other. Emptiness of nature entails that there is a ground or essence of the emptiness of [natureless] phenomena. That ground is dharmatā, the essence that is the pristine wisdom of discriminating self-awareness.

Thus, no kind of emptiness is not included in either the emptiness of unreal things or the emptiness of the essence of unreal things; therefore, no kind of emptiness is not included in emptiness of a thing of itself and its emptiness of other things. As many kinds of emptiness as may be taught are summarized in these two.

The completely pure texts of the tradition that teaches the profound way things are speak of “not existent, not non-existent,” or “completely transcending existence and non-existence,” or “free from the extremes of existence and non-existence,” and so forth.

[The meaning is that,] in resolving suchness, 1) phenomena that are empty of themselves are not existent, and 2) the absolute ground of emptiness, dharmatā, is not non-existent.

That should be understood actually to mean that dharmatā is not existent, not non-existent, and so forth.¹¹³⁵ If it is seen like that, the meaning of the great intention is **correctly** seen.

Teaching the defining characteristics of suchness, the *Ornament of the Mahāyāna Sūtras* says: “Not existent, not non-existent, not similar, not other,” [Vasubandhu’s] commentary says:

Characteristics of the imagined and the dependent do not exist.
The completely established characteristics of dharmatā are not non-existent....

Since dharmatā does not have the ever-present afflictions by nature, it can never become pure [of them.] Since it is eternally pure of incidental defilements, it can never be purified of them.

The meaning taught there has no internal contradictions at all. Similarly, the venerable noble one Nāgārjuna says in his *Stages of Meditation on the Middle Way*:

Since, by pure prajñā, in that way,
This intrinsic essence of the absolute,
Is completely established **as the nature of things**,
Other imputed things cannot arise.

There he says that, since the intrinsic essence of the absolute is totally established, it is not non-existent. However, [merely] imputed things other than the absolute cannot arise or exist within it. That being so, completely

pure prajñā is necessary for knowing the meaning of “Not existent, not non-existent” in that way. That is the meaning. That is also the meaning of the following passage from the glorious *Vajra Garland Tantra*:

Mantrikas who have union
With suchness totally see.

The insight of meditation totally sees [reality]. That is the meaning. *Nāgārjuna’s Autocommentary to the Root verses on the Middle Way* says that the absolute is absolute, because it is truth itself. Its being “truth” is the reason why it is absolute truth.¹¹³⁶ By that, how it is posited as absolute truth is taught. These points clear away claims that the absolute cannot be true. If so, the absolute truth taught by these statements cannot be empty of itself. The intrinsic nature that is the absolute is the self-arising pristine wisdom of the tathāgatas. The noble one Vajragarbha extensively teaches:

The essence of the authentic natural state is the self-aware pristine wisdom of the tathāgatas, pervading space. That pristine wisdom is awareness of that essence that also is that essence. It is the ground primordially free from the six producers of graspers, [the sense powers,] the six grasped sense objects, and the six graspers, [the sense consciousnesses....]

A yogin should meditate on the ground, precious suchness primordially free from these eighteen sense constituents,¹¹³⁷ with devoted attention to it as [self-aware] suchness.

Self-aware absolute truth that is free from the extremes of existence and non-existence 1) transcends the [self-empty] phenomena of interdependent arising, 2) never deteriorates from its own essence, and 3) is naturally not empty of its own essence. Master Jñānagarbha says in his *Path of Yogic Meditation*:

That which [is self-arising,] does not arise depending on cause and conditions, and does not deteriorate from its own non-empty essence. That is called “the absolute nature.” That is the fundamental nature of the truth of cessation.

The *Arising of Great Intense Faith Sūtra* says:

Peace that does not arise conditioned by others,
Does not proliferate due to proliferations,
Is completely non-conceptual non-multiplicity,¹¹³⁸
Those are the characteristics defining suchness.¹¹³⁹

Similarly, *Nāgārjuna’s Root Verses on the Middle Way* says:

That which is peaceful, and is not known from others,
And does not proliferate due to proliferations,
Is non-conceptual, and is not different objects—
Those are the characteristics defining suchness.¹¹⁴⁰

Suchness is truly taught as: 1) primordial, natural peace, 2) absence of proliferating complexities of **the relative**, 3) completely non-conceptual, and 4) possession of the single taste of pristine wisdom.

These are also taught as characteristics of the absolute empty of other. That being so, “the twenty kinds of emptiness are all emptiness of self” cannot be the meaning of the [Buddha’s] great intention.

1) Absolute truth, 2) the natural enlightened family, 3) the phenomena that are the buddha qualities of dharmakāya, 4) the essence, 5) the essence of unreal things, and 6) emptiness of other things are [all] emptiness, but none of them are emptiness of themselves.

The enjoyer, enjoyed, and so forth, are empty of their own essences. As such, they are non-existent in that absolute ground. Entirely unestablished, they do not exist there even a little.¹¹⁴¹ However, the ground of emptiness of those phenomena, dharmadhātu, remains there after analysis.¹¹⁴² Therefore, it truly and purely exists. With exactly that intention, the advocate of the Greater Madhyamaka, the noble one Asaṅga says [in his *Bodhisattva Levels*]:

How is emptiness wrongly understood? Any monastic practitioners and Brahmins who do not maintain **that there is a ground of** emptiness of what is empty and who also do not maintain **that there is a ground of negation of** what is **negated as** empty, **so maintaining that everything is empty of itself**; are people said to have wrong understanding of emptiness.

Why? **Phenomena** that are empty should be known to be non-existent emptiness. **The ground** in which they are empty should be known to be existent emptiness.

If everything is non-existent, how could anything be empty in anything?¹¹⁴³ Therefore, it is wrong that that **ground of emptiness** is empty of that **ground of emptiness** itself. **If a ground that is dharmatā empty of dharmatā were possible, then, absurdly, dharmatā, the nature of phenomena, would not be the nature of all phenomena. Maintaining that everything is empty of itself is [simply] a wrong understanding of emptiness.**

What then, is right understanding of emptiness? Those correctly know the situation as it is who see that 1) because some **phenomenon** is non-existent in some **ground, that ground** is empty of that phenomenon, while 2) **the ground itself** remains there after that analysis, and it purely and truly exists.

That is called “abiding purely and truly in emptiness as it is, without error.”

There, and so forth, this is extensively taught. You should definitely check it out. **In the same vein, The Questions of Kāśyapa in the Jewel Heap Sūtra** says:

Kāśyapa, even an exaggerated view of the selfhood of individuals as big as Mount Meru would be better than the overreaching¹¹⁴⁴ pride of the view **that everything is empty of its own essence**.

Why so? Kāśyapa, **the means** that brings people forth from all views¹¹⁴⁵ is emptiness.

Kāśyapa, those who make emptiness itself into a view of “Emptiness-only,” **where everything is empty of its own essence**, are incurable. That is how I explain it....

For example, if a physician, gives a patient
A purgative that will remove his sickness,
But the sickness is not carried off and purged,¹¹⁴⁶
The sickness is not cured in such a patient.

So, if the best way to rescue people
From the darkness of views is emptiness,
Whoever makes a view of emptiness-only¹¹⁴⁷
The Conqueror teaches to be incurable.

Also, the noble one Nāgārjuna says:

Emptiness is taught by the conquerors
To being release from every kind of view.
But it is taught that will not work on those
Who make a view of emptiness itself.

And:

If emptiness itself is wrongly viewed,¹¹⁴⁸
Those of little prajñā will be destroyed.

There, and so forth, it is taught that resolving everything as [self-]empty is a great fault. **Explaining the view of emptiness that way, and trying to practice a [so-called] yoga of universal self-emptiness¹¹⁴⁹ is not the Buddha’s intention at all.**

2". **How All the Grounds of the [Sixteen] Emptinesses Abide as Absolute Deities, Compassion, and So Forth**

Likewise, when it is said in the precious tantras, “The pillars [of the maṇḍala palace] are the sixteen emptinesses,” **as in the First Buddha** or “The arms of the deity are the sixteen emptinesses,” **as in Hevajra**, and when **Cakrasaṃvara** speaks of “the sixteen petals of the lotus,” [at the center of] the essence maṇḍala and “the sixteen charnel grounds at the outer [edge],” and many tantras of “the sixteen parts of the outer circle of the maṇḍala,” all these are teaching the sixteen kinds of emptiness. These are also the meaning of the syllable E, the source of dharmas, the bhaga, the element of space, the lion throne, and so forth.

Self-emptiness, unreal emptiness, and empty emptiness is not the intention of these. [Absolute truth] is distinguished in terms of these sixteen aspects as the absolute ground of self-emptiness, the naturally existing enlightened family, the emptiness that is the [real] essence of unreal things, emptiness of other things, and non-empty emptiness.

Moreover, the emanation of the Lord of the World, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, says:

“The sixteen emptinesses are the ‘other’ black or dark side, [the sixteen days of the phases of the waning moon,] as well as the ‘other’ sun and prajñā.” The “eleven days of compassion” are those of the white or light side, skillful means, and the waxing moon.

Also:

The great emptiness has three divisions: 1) emptiness pervading space, 2) great emptiness, and 3) absolute emptiness. Emptiness is [self-emptiness in dharmatā of the five skandhas, the first five days of the ‘other,’ dark, waning period. Great emptiness is [self-emptiness in dharmatā of the five elements, the ‘other’ sixth through tenth days. Absolute emptiness is [self-emptiness in dharmatā] of the ‘other’ five sense powers, the ‘other’ eleventh through fifteenth days.

These ‘other’ fifteen days [of waning] ending with the empty sky [of the new moon] are fifteen kinds of [self-emptiness. The middle period between the end of the new moon day and the beginning of the first day of the white side [of the waxing moon,] is emptiness [of other] possessing all aspects.

The light side is taught as sixteen kinds of compassion, at the end of which, [at the time of the full moon,] there is unity. That unity is said to be the nature of both the sixteen kinds of emptiness and the sixteen kinds of compassion. These are the meaning of the symbolism of sixteen arms, skulls, and so forth.

To realize the meaning of these as it is, it is necessary to realize well the meaning that has no faults of contradiction of “dharmatā without aspects possessing all aspects.” That essence is other than, better than, and beyond all outer and inner phenomena of the relative.

3". **How, If These [Sets of Sixteen and Their Union] are Realized, by Abandoning the Two Extremes, They are Realized as the Middle or Intermediate, the Neuter, the Unexampled, and the Third Alternative**

If these [sets of sixteen] are realized, the meaning of the profound Middle free from extremes is realized. That is the case, because these [sets of sixteen] are not freedom from or emptiness of extremes as a mere non-affirming negation or exclusion. They are a middle way or intermediate step that abandons the two extremes by being affirmatively established as

a third alternative. The very competent master Bodhibhadra's *Connected Explanation of Āryadeva's Compilation of the Essence of Pristine Wisdom* says:

Not existent and not non-existent can be spoken
Because there is a third alternative to those.¹¹⁵⁰

The *Questions of Kāśyapa in the Jewel Heap Sūtra* says:

Kāśyapa, "permanent" is one extreme of **what is uncompounded like space.**

"Impermanent" is a second extreme of compounded things **like a vase.**

The middle between these two extremes, **powerless like space,¹¹⁵¹ a third alternative that is neither permanent nor impermanent,¹¹⁵² is [absolute] pristine wisdom.**

That alternative is unanalyzable, and indemonstrable to **consciousness.¹¹⁵³** Not a support of **[causally and conceptually] related [relative] phenomena,** non-appearing in the three realms, it is unknowable **by consciousness.** It has no place in the **[spatio-temporal and causal grid] connecting relative phenomena.** Kāśyapa, this is the **self-arising,** non-conceptual path of the Middle Way, discriminating **pristine wisdom pervading space.**

Kāśyapa, [the merely relative] "self," **maintained by the Indian extremists,¹¹⁵⁴** is one extreme.

"Selflessness" that maintains that everything is empty of itself is a second **extreme.**

The middle between these two extremes, **because relative self is non-existent and absolute self is not non-existent, is a third alternative that** is self-arising pristine wisdom. That wisdom is unanalyzable, indemonstrable, not a support, non-appearing, unknowable, and without place.¹¹⁵⁵

Kāśyapa, this is the path of the Middle Way, discriminating **pristine wisdom.**

And:

Kāśyapa, "existence," **as conceptual realists explain it,** is one extreme.

Non-existence **of everything as empty of itself** is a second **extreme.**

The middle between these two, because **relative phenomena are non-existent and dharmatā is not non-existent, is a third alternative that is self-arising pristine wisdom.** That wisdom is unanalyzable, indemonstrable, not a support, non-appearing, unknowable, and without place.

Kāśyapa, this is the path of the Middle Way, the vision of discriminating pristine wisdom that pervades space.

And:

Kāśyapa, “saṃsāra” is one extreme.

Nirvāṇa [that is conceptualized vacuity,] like that of Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha arhats, is a second extreme.

The middle between these two, the great nirvāṇa, is a third alternative that is the inseparable [union of] saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. That is unanalyzable, indemonstrable, not a support, non-appearing, unknowable, and without place.

Kāśyapa, this is the path of the Middle Way, discriminating pristine wisdom, pervading space.

Thus, the middle that abandons the two extremes, the Middle Way of dharmatā, is taught as a third alternative. The victorious Maitreya also teaches that this middle that has abandoned the two extremes has the characteristics of completely non-conceptual pristine wisdom in *Discrimination of Dharmas and Dharmatā*:

When this middle is described as being 1) unexaminable, and 2) indemonstrable, 3) without support,¹¹⁵⁶ and also 4) without appearance, 5) unknowable, and 6) present in no place, these six express, according to the sūtra,¹¹⁵⁷ the defining characteristics of pristine wisdom.

Vasubandhu’s *Commentary on Discrimination of the Middle and Extremes* also clarifies the meaning of the “middle free from extremes” taught in the *Jewel Heap Sūtra*:

Saying “individuals and phenomena exist” is the extreme of eternalism saying that non-existent compounded phenomena exist in the fundamental way things are.

Saying “Everything is non-existent” is the extreme of nihilism that says even truly existent absolute selfhood is nothingness that does not exist [at all].

By completely abandoning these two extremes, there is the middle path that is the middle between these two extremes.

The middle is the third alternative, maintaining that the selfhood of individuals and phenomena does not exist, while the great selfhood is not non-existent. Teaching that [middle] clears away the assertion by some that “A middle free from the two extremes is not established.” Others who maintain a Middle Way, but no middle, are also mistaken.

Here “Madhya” means “inner,” “between,” “center,” [or “middle.”] The meaning is that profound dharmadhātu is a Middle Way that is neither of the dichotomous extremes [of conventional discourse.] Teaching that as a third alternative, a neutral state, or saying that the middle is beyond worldly examples also has that meaning.

That is so, even though a third alternative without faults of contradiction is not possible within relative truth, [and it is not fully describable within conventional discourse, as the second turning establishes.] The root text of *Discriminating the Middle and Extremes with Vasubandhu’s commentary*, which is a text of the Greater Madhyamaka says:

This is a treatise discriminating the middle,
Because it fully teaches the middle path.

This text differentiates the middle and extremes because it fully teaches both 1) the middle, **the absolute beyond things that exist and things that do not exist**, and 2) the extremes **of the relative that do not transcend things that exist and things that do not exist**.

That is also true because this text fully teaches the middle that abandons the beginning and end, as **below**.

The Blessed Lord of the World, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, says:

The absolute transcending things that exist and those that do not exist is capable of manifesting all aspects, **self-**arisen from space, all-good, and endowed with all powers.

It abides as **natural**, innate joy, the nature of all ‘**other**’ sentient beings. It excludes reasons and examples, because neither [relative] real things and unreal [relative] non-things are **suitable** examples of it, **if one is being sought**. That is **without faults of contradiction**, because **both** real things and unreal things, are [relative] phenomena. They do not accord with **the reality of such an [experiential] absolute**. **If that absolute could be fully included within relative truth, they would be suitable to accord with it.**

To give a worldly example, [a non-existent, relative] sky flower is a phenomenon that does not accord with an [existent, relative] vase, as it is non-existent in all ways of being non-existent. The two things described are examples of mutually non-according relative phenomena. **However, if they could be gathered into one, they would exemplify the absolute.**

Similarly, because it is the non-according phenomenon of nothingness, saṃsāric existence is present in all [saṃsāric] real things. By being the non-according class of phenomena of saṃsāric existence, nothingness is non-existent in in all ways of being non-existent. [Understood] in terms of this “nothingness,” **the nirvāṇa of Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, as commonly understood, has the characteristics of an unreal non-thing, like the extinguished flame of**

a lamp. These examples are cited to teach the inseparability of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.

If you were searching for an acceptable example of the **primordially and naturally** world-transcending **absolute**, a vase and a sky flower would be equally **suitable**, if the **absolute existed in saṃsāra**.

However, **without faults of contradiction**, since a vase and a sky flower are both saṃsāric [and relative,] **both** are non-according phenomena of the [nirvāṇic] absolute. That is the case even though a vase and a sky flower are mutually contradictory in the worldly relative, and they **cannot** be the same thing **there**.

Also, it says there:

Because of being beyond worldly examples, the kind of mind that is naturally luminous and [intrinsically] existent is free from characteristics of eternalistic and nihilistic phenomena of **incidental non-mind**. Yet, as inseparable emptiness and compassion, **[absolute mind] is inseparable awareness and the space of the dhātu**.

4". **After Eliminating Many Mistaken Wrong Conceptions, Explaining Reality As It Is**

Objection: What you say contradicts the conventional wisdom that actual dichotomies like existence and non-existence, real things and unreal things, existent and non-existent forms and so forth have no third alternative.

Answer: True, but these dichotomies are formulated in relative terms. The absolute is not [forced onto] one horn of the dilemmas [intrinsic to dualistic, conventional discourse,] like that of existence or non-existence.

As is said in many texts like the *Kālacakra*:

The absolute “completely transcends existence and non-existence,”
The absolute “is not existent and not non-existent.”

Also, **as is said in many texts like the *Kālacakra*:**

The absolute is “the principal reality that has exhausted real things and unreal non-things.”

Also, **as is said in the *Hevajra*:**

For that reason, the Buddha is not a real thing,
And also, is not an unreal non-thing.

The *Short Teaching on Empowerment* says:

Completely liberated from form and non-form...

There and elsewhere, **many texts excellently** teach **a third alternative without faults of contradiction**. The many exponents who have decided that all knowables must be either real things or unreal non-things [of the relative] have simply failed to realize dharmatā, the absolute way

things are. The absolute is indeed an object of knowledge, but it is a very special one that exists neither as a real thing nor an unreal non-thing [of the relative.] It is established as a third alternative that is a central or intermediate reality.

Objection: If, [as you say,] the absolute is an object of knowledge, that contradicts Śantideva's saying in *Entering into the Practice of a Bodhisattva*:

The absolute is not within the sphere of mind...¹¹⁵⁸

And also, *the Diamond Sūtra*, when it says:

Since dharmatā is not a knowable object,
It cannot be known by means of consciousness.

Answer: There is no fault. These passages have the intention that the absolute is not within the scope of relative mind, because it cannot be known by being perceived in [dualistic, conceptual] consciousness. They do not say that the absolute is not an object of knowledge for pristine wisdom.

Master Ratnakīrti says in his Praise to the Deities of the Four Applications:

Perfection of prajñā without speech, thought, or expression,
Unborn, unceasing, with a nature like the sky,
Experienced by only discriminating wisdom,
[I prostrate to the Mother of the Conquerors.]

Also, *the Sublime Continuum* says:

The object of those who see the absolute.

Many tantras say of the absolute of the truth of cessation:

Because it is not material, it is knowing what we are.

And:

Because it is not material, it is self-awareness itself.

Also:

Manifesting all self-knowledge and other-knowledge...

The Hevajra says regarding the [absolute] truth of cessation:

Self-awareness, the great bliss itself,
By knowing itself,¹¹⁵⁹ attains enlightenment.

The Compendium of Precious Qualities says:

Because the bodhisattvas realize this suchness,
The Buddha bestows on them the name "tathāgata."

[There is also no fault] because, as many completely pure scriptures teach again and again, absolute emptiness is the [true] selfhood that is compassionate enlightened mind. Profound dharmadhātu, the middle that

has abandoned the two extremes, is not knowable by consciousness, but it is known by pristine wisdom. That is so, because it is the five [self-aware] pristine wisdoms, known by [and as] the self-perception of pure and true pristine wisdom¹¹⁶⁰ arising from other.

Thus, the ground free from all extremes of existence, non-existence, and so forth, omnipresent dharmadhātu, is established as the **fundamental** way things are, enlightenment.

Objection: If the Buddha is said to be either “existent” or “non-existent,” one will fall into the extremes of existence and non-existence. [Maitreya’s] *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

Therefore, it is not said that the Buddha
Is either existent or non-existent.
When this is asked about the Buddha.
Assertions are inappropriate.

Answer: Being without extremes of existence and non-existence is of two kinds.

1. On the occasion of total resting in meditation,¹¹⁶¹ all proliferations of existence, non-existence, and so forth, must be rejected. There [should be] no speech, thought or expression at all.
2. In subsequent attainment, on the occasion of resolving verbally how things are, faultless judgements are made that “the existent exists” and “the non-existent does not exist.”

If the opposite were done in either case, there would be a fault of falling into extremes. The meaning of, “The Buddha is not existent and also not non-existent,” is that the Buddha is taught 1) not to exist **inseparably** with [saṃsāric] mind and 2) to be not non-existent **inseparably** with pristine wisdom.

The same text says:

Just like heat **that is pacified** in iron,
And floaters that are pacified in the eyes,¹¹⁶²
Do not say Buddha¹¹⁶³ exists or does not exist,
Without distinguishing mind and pristine wisdom.¹¹⁶⁴

When iron is cool, no heat exists there, but the iron itself is not non-existent. When faults of the eyes are [pacified as] non-existent, the eyes themselves are not non-existent.

Saying, “It is not existent and not non-existent,” seems to be contradictory; but if the statement is properly analyzed, it is not. The way the statement is not contradictory and the reason it is not contradictory are as explained.

According to what some maintain, statements like “The Buddha is not existent and not non-existent,” or “All relative phenomena are not existent and not non-existent.” should not be understood like that. [They are supposed to mean,] “even if a certain phenomenon’s existence is refuted, it

is not established as non-existent, and even if its non-existence is refuted, it is not established as existent.” [They say that is so, because, no assertions withstand analysis for absolute truth, and therefore, no assertions are established at all. That interpretation is correct regarding the logical absolute,] but does not accord with the intention of the Victorious One [here,] because [in conventional discourse] 1) existence and non-existence are mutually contradictory and 2) the negation of a negation is an affirmation, so that a double negation does the job of the original affirmation. A double negation of something [established] is also established.

Objection: That contradicts your [allegedly] establishing earlier that the way things are, buddhahood, is a third alternative, the middle that abandons existence and non-existence.

Answer: There is no fault, because our previous presentation was concerned with abandoning the extremes of relative real things and unreal non-things for forms, and so forth. This one is concerned with whether freedom from extremes itself exists or not in the [experiential] absolute way things are, [according to the criteria of conventional discourse.] If you understand it that way, you will understand that there is no contradiction between my assertions about 1) not falling into any extremes of existence, non-existence, and so forth, and 2) saying that freedom from extremes itself always exists in the way things are.

Falling into extremes is possible only for conceptual phenomena of the relative. The ground [free from concept] is [consequentially] free from all extremes of existence, non-existence, and so forth. That [ground] is absolute buddhahood, the profound way things are.

Objection: How so? Dharmatā and buddhahood cannot be established as objects of knowledge [at all.] Therefore, they cannot be [established as] existent [objects of knowledge,] and also they cannot be [established as] non-existent [objects of knowledge.]

Answer: Then the horns of a rabbit, and all such [non-existent] things that cannot be perceived objects of knowledge, would absurdly be not [established as] non-existent.

In any case, maintaining that dharmatā, buddhahood, does not exist as an object of knowledge is the most sacrilegious, nihilistic view [there could be.] It is an intolerably depraved view. With such views in mind, the Blessed One makes statements in many sūtras, like saying that [buddhahood exists] “Whether tathāgatas appear or do not appear...” He also says:

Do not make the claim that the Buddha does not exist.
The Buddha exists in meditative equanimity.

There, and so forth, this is extensively taught by the Buddha himself. The venerable noble one Nāgārjuna also says *in his Praise of Dharmadhātu*:

Sentient beings that have the afflictive emotions
Are unable to see the Tathāgata.¹¹⁶⁵
In the same way that hungry [and thirsty] ghosts
See the ocean as a dried-up desert;¹¹⁶⁶

So, because of the obscurations of ignorance,
They **imagine** that the buddhas do not exist.¹¹⁶⁷
For such lowly ones of little merit¹¹⁶⁸
What could be accomplished by a blessed one?

Yet, like supremely precious, **shining** jewels
Being placed in the hands of those who are blind,
For sentient beings who do meritorious actions,
In luminous light that is imbued with glory,

Blazing with the thirty-two major marks,
There will be a buddha abiding before them.

Also:

In the world the simile is made,
“Like a banana tree that has no heart.”¹¹⁶⁹
Yet, the sweet fruit of [a banana tree,]¹¹⁷⁰
That is its essence, is eaten by sentient beings.

So, within saṃsāra that has no heart,¹¹⁷¹
On separation from the mire of afflictions,
Its essence that is buddhahood itself
Becomes the amṛita of all embodied beings.¹¹⁷²

Also, he says in his **Praise of the Absolute, Praise of the Three Kāyas, Praise of Vajra Mind**, and many other texts,¹¹⁷³ as does lord Great Compassion:¹¹⁷⁴

As the fruit of exhausting heartless cyclic existence,
The buddhahood of a great being **is attained**.
Just as ripening of a banana fruit
Truly arises from the death of the tree.¹¹⁷⁵

The many such teachings that the Buddha exists in the way things are
should not be disparaged.

Objection: “Not existent and not non-existent,” is taught with the intention
that the Buddha is non-existent absolutely and not non-existent in the
relative.¹¹⁷⁶

Answer: Since some people think that way, we should discuss it. The kind
of Buddha that is non-existent in the absolute and not non-existent in the
relative is not the ultimate Buddha. Ultimate dharmakāya is completely
free from any [temporary], relative phenomena, because the essence of
things, absolute suchness, is eternal. Ultimate buddhahood, dharmakāya,
is the ultimate pure and true. Ultimate existence and ultimate truth are
absolute existence and absolute truth. Bhūtakoti¹¹⁷⁷ is the Sanskrit word

used here. Its meaning should be understood to be ultimate existence and ultimate truth. That is also ultimate buddhahood. With that intention the Blessed One teaches in *The Sūtra of the Meditative Absorption of the Four Children*:

What is not absolutely truth cannot be suchness.¹¹⁷⁸

What is not suchness is not the Tathāgata.

There, and so forth, this is extensively taught.

Objection: As no phenomena at all truly exist, absolute truth is impossible.

Answer: Not so. If something does not truly exist in the relative, that it is truly existent in the relative is wrong. What is true in the relative is true in the relative, but it is not true in the absolute.

Contrariwise, if something is not true in the absolute, that it is true in the absolute is wrong. What is true in the absolute is true in the absolute, but it is not true in the relative.

The venerable noble one Nāgārjuna says in his *Autocommentary [on the Root Verses on the Middle Way,] the Akutobhayā*:

Since absolute truth is apprehended by the noble ones **who have mastered the three realms as** non-erroneous, the **ground pervading space** in which all phenomena are seen to be unborn is seen to be absolute truth [by these noble ones themselves.] That is why it is absolute truth.

Those who maintain that this excellent autocommentary, [the *Akutobhayā*,] is a Tibetan [forgery] are wrong.¹¹⁷⁹ Master Avalokītavratā's commentary and Atīśa's *Autocommentary on the Lamp of the Path* say that there are eight commentaries on the *Root Verses on the Middle Way*, including Nāgārjuna's own *Akutobhayā*. A sūtra cited in the *Akutobhayā* says:

O Monks, it is like this: The non-deceptive phenomenon nirvāṇa is supreme truth.

In his *Commentary on Bhāvaviveka's Lamp of Prajñā*¹¹⁸⁰, Avalokītvratā cites that passage. Buddhapālita's *Commentary on the Root Verses on the Middle Way* quotes it as well, adding:

Furthermore, **fundamental** truth, **pervading space**, is one. There is no second.

Also, Nāgārjuna's *Sixty Stanzas on Reasoning* says:

When it was said by the Conquerors,
"Nirvāṇa alone is true,"
What competent person would think,
"All else¹¹⁸¹ is unmistaken?"

The *Bodhisattva Piṭaka Sūtra* says:

Truth is singular, not two-fold. Truth is the truth of cessation.

Also:

What is unborn, **the ground pervading space**, is definitive.
 What is definitive, **dharmatā**, is definitive meaning.

The *Holy Golden Light Sūtra* says:

Since the dharmakāya of the Tathāgata is authentic truth, **pervading space**, it is called “nirvāṇa.”

The *Meeting of Father and Son Sūtra* says:

This ‘enlightenment’ is the pure, true ultimate.

The *Śrīmāla-devī Sūtra* says:

The truth of the cessation of suffering, as pure truth, is true, eternal, [absolute] refuge.

Candrakīrti’s *Clear Words* says:

The Blessed One said, ‘O Monks, this is absolute truth. It is like this:
 It is nirvāṇa, **pervading space**, having non-deceptive phenomena.¹¹⁸²

The texts of profound secret mantra also extensively say things like:

Possessing the twelve aspects of truth, and abiding in the manner of the two truths....

Relative truths are not really true. However, if being unborn [absolutely is said to] refute arising [by the criteria of] relative [truth,] that is a mistake. To refute it, Jñānagarbha’s *Two Truths of the Middle Way* says:

Some who are famed for bad arguments
 Say things are not really produced,
 Not even within the relative,
 Like the son of a barren woman.

Objection: The ultimate Buddha [of realization] does exist, but if he is viewed as truly existing, the viewer will fall into extremes. The *King of Meditative Concentrations Sūtra* says:

In the total equality of meditation,
 Both existence and non-existence are extremes.¹¹⁸³
 Pure and impure also are extremes,¹¹⁸⁴
 Having completely abandoned these two extremes,¹¹⁸⁵
 Those who are wise do not dwell in the middle either.¹¹⁸⁶

Also, Nāgārjuna’s *Root Verses on the Middle Way* says:

Thoughts of “existence” are grasping eternity.
And non-existence is a view of nothingness.
 For that reason, the wise do not abide
 In **thoughts of** either existence or non-existence.

Answer: Those passages are concerned with profound meditation that passes the [pass of complexity] into freedom from proliferation of all [conceptual complexities like] existence and non-existence. I am speaking about a situation [of subsequent attainment] in which existence and non-existence are appropriately distinguished [in conventional language,] so there is no fault. The *Root Verses on the Middle Way* also says:

Those of small understanding who have a view
Of realities as existent or non-existent,
Because of **those conceptions**, do not see peace,
The pristine wisdom that pacifies what is viewed.¹¹⁸⁷

These words say that if we [conceptually] view ... existence and non-existence, we fixate **conceptual thoughts** about them. Then we cannot see the dhātu of peace. To see that dhātu, profound meditation free from all proliferation of phenomenal complexity is required. That is the meaning.

[However,] on occasions [of subsequent attainment where we are] resolving [what we should say about] distinctions of permanence and impermanence, the same suchness, – partless, omnipresent, all-pervading pristine wisdom, free from [being an entity that exists in] one instant or many – is conceptually postulated as having the qualities of being eternal and stable. It endures as an everlasting, changeless swastika.

On the other hand, all phenomena, [like those of abhidharma,] that do not transcend being instantaneous are postulated as having the qualities of being impermanent, unstable, non-enduring, and changeable. That is true even though meditation requires passing the pass into non-proliferation of all conceptual complexities whatsoever. The *Root Verses on the Middle Way* says:

How could the four like permanence and impermanence¹¹⁸⁸
Exist in this peace, **the nature of phenomena?**
How could the four like extremes and the absence of these
Exist in this peace, **the nature of phenomena?**...¹¹⁸⁹

Those words teach the freedom from proliferating conceptual complexity required in meditation. The *Sūtra requested by Ratnacūḍa within the Jewel Heap Sūtra* says:

Moreover, son of noble family, “self” and “selflessness” are both extremes. The essence completely pure of **conceptions of self and selflessness** is the path of the Middle Way **that attains dharmadhātu.**

“Living being”¹¹⁹⁰ and “person” are both extremes. The essence completely pure of conceptions of living being and person is the path of the Middle Way.

Fixating concepts of “having characteristics” and “without characteristics” are both extremes. Absence of conceptualized characteristics is the path of the Middle Way.

Conceptual thoughts of “apprehension” and “non-apprehension” are both extremes. Absence of [verifying and] falsifying conceptual apprehension is the path of the Middle Way.

Conceptions of “false” and “true” are both extremes. Meditation without speech, thought, or expression is the path of the Middle Way.

Fixating concepts of “this side” and “that side” are both extremes. Means of stopping the destruction and gathering¹¹⁹¹ of the skandhas is the path of the Middle Way.

Fixating concepts of “compounded” and “uncompounded” are both extremes. Absence of analysis, nay concepts altogether, is the path of the Middle Way.

Fixating concepts of “saṃsāra” and “nirvāṇa” are both extremes. Absence of consciousness, conceptualized awareness,¹¹⁹² as the ground, pristine wisdom, is the path of the Middle Way.

The intention of this passage is that these absences are necessary on the occasion of profound, completely non-conceptual meditation. It is not the intention of this passage that these absences are necessary on the occasion of discrimination in subsequent attainment. In various other completely pure textual traditions as well, there are teachings of freedom from all proliferating complexities of dichotomies like those of existence and non-existence, pleasure and pain, true and false, permanent and impermanent, empty and non-empty, pure and impure, peaceful and not peaceful, being devoid of something or not, having or not having selfhood, arising and cessation existing or not existing, characteristics existing or not existing, contaminations existing or not existing, goodness existing or not existing, transcending the world or not, transcending consciousness and conceptual logic or not, and transcending the instantaneous and interdependent arising or not.

The intention is that all these dichotomies pass the pass into the equality of profound, completely non-conceptual meditation. It is mistaken to say that these sources refute individual perceptions [and judgements] in occasions of discriminating [pristine wisdom]. Those who would like to be competent about the intention of scriptures must not mistakenly mix up [the Buddha’s] intentions regarding these separate occasions.

Similarly, statements like, “Valid cognition of permanence does not exist,” apply to the relative. They should be understood not to apply to the absolute at all.

5". **Teaching That All the Kinds of Emptiness that Have Been Taught Can Be Included Within Two**

“The utterly and completely pure eighteen emptinesses” refers to the eighteen emptinesses of the perfectly established ground, dharmatā. That ground is utterly and completely pure of the eighteen emptinesses of the imagined and dependent. The [eighteen relative] emptinesses taught in the *Vajra Garland Tantra* are explained as emptinesses of conceptually grasping the eighteen [absolute ones] listed above. Fearing it would require too many words, I have not written about them.

i'. **How the Thirty-Seven Phenomena on the Side of Enlightenment, Completely Pure Dharmatā, Abide as Absolute Deities, Tantras, Realms, and So Forth,**

Similarly, the utterly and completely pure [thirty-seven] qualities on the side of enlightenment are the thirty-seven qualities on the side of enlightenment of the perfectly established ground, dharmatā. That ground is utterly and completely pure of the [thirty-seven] qualities on the side of enlightenment of the imagined and dependent.

These [thirty-seven qualities] are also taught to be the thirty-seven opening syllables of the introductory passage of the king of profound tantras, the *Guhyasamāja*, and to be pristine wisdom deities that are their meanings.

The tantra, in Sanskrit, begins:

EVAM MAYĀ ŚRUTAM EKASMIN SAMAYE BHAGAVĀN SARVA-
TATHĀGATA KĀYA VAK CITTA HRDAYA¹¹⁹³ VAJRA¹¹⁹⁴ SYOṢID¹¹⁹⁵
BHAGEṢU VIJAHĀRA

[In English, the meaning is:]

Thus I heard at one time, when the Blessed One was abiding in the bhagas of the vajra goddesses, the heart-essence of the body, speech, and mind of all the tathāgatas,...

The meaning of each syllable of this introductory passage is taught by the noble one Vajragarbha to be the deity listed below. For the [six] ‘other’ sense constituents of dharmatā:

1. E is Locanā.
2. VAM is Māmakī
3. MA is Pāṇḍaravāsini,
4. YĀ is Tārinī.¹¹⁹⁶
5. ŚRU is Vajradhātviśvarī.
6. TAM¹¹⁹⁷ is Prajñāpāramitā.

For the six ‘other’ skandhas of dharmatā:

7. E is Vajrasattva.
8. KA is Akṣobhya.
9. SMIN is Amoghasiddhi.
10. SA is Ratnasambhava.
11. MA is Amitābha.
12. YE is Vairocana.

For the six **absolute** outer sense sources:

13. BHA is Gandhavajrā.¹¹⁹⁸
14. GA is Rasavajrā.¹¹⁹⁹
15. VÂN is Bhāsavajrā.¹²⁰⁰
16. SA is Sparśavajrā.¹²⁰¹
17. RVA is Śabdavajrā.¹²⁰²
18. TA is Dharmadhātuvajrā.¹²⁰³

For the six **absolute** outer sense sources:

19. THA is Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin.
20. GA is the Lord of the World, Avalokiteśvara.
21. TA is Kṣitigarbha.
22. KĀ is Akāśagarbha.
23. YA is Vajrapāṇi.
24. VĀK is Samantabhadra.

For the actions of the **absolute** action faculties:

25. CI is Stambhī.¹²⁰⁴
26. TTA is Mānīnī.¹²⁰⁵
27. VA is Jambhī.¹²⁰⁶
28. JRA is Ativīrya.¹²⁰⁷
29. YO is Atinīla.¹²⁰⁸
30. ŚID is Raudrākṣī.¹²⁰⁹

For the **absolute** action faculties:

31. BHA is Sumbha.¹²¹⁰
32. GE is Uṣṇīṣa.
33. ŚU is Vighnāntaka.¹²¹¹
34. VI is Prajñāntaka.¹²¹²
35. JA is Padmāntaka.¹²¹³
36. HĀ is Yamāntaka.¹²¹⁴

37. RA is the principal one Vajrasattva, with the nature of unified prajñā and skillful means, **the pervasive meaning of them all. Remember that he is the absolute, secret drop of inseparable expresser and expressed.**

In this way, the thirty-seven phenomena on the side of enlightenment **of the truth of cessation**, are also **primordially, naturally**, completely pure **absolute deities of the truth of cessation**. They are deities of the following [thirty-seven] classifications:

1. The six dhātus,
2. The six skandhas,¹²¹⁵
3. The six sense objects,
4. The six sense faculties,
5. The activities of the six action faculties,¹²¹⁶
6. The six action faculties.¹²¹⁷
7. The [single,] great bliss of the fourth [empowerment] that

exhausts saṃsāric duality.

That is how the thirty-seven phenomena on the side of enlightenment, summarized by the following classifications of the truth of cessation, are also deities and tantras of the truth of cessation:

The four objects of mindfulness,
The four complete abandonments,
The four legs of miracle,
The five strengths,
The five powers,
The eight-fold path of the noble ones,
The seven limbs of enlightenment.

Also, the glorious *Stainless Light* says:

The thirty-seven phenomena on the side of enlightenment, included within perfectly established dharmatā and the truth of cessation, are taught to be absolute yoginīs, realms, and so forth. In the passage of [the *Kālacakra Tantra*] “Now mindfulness...,” the thirty-seven phenomena on the side of enlightenment are taught to be **primordially**, completely pure yoginīs of the truth of cessation. For the four goddesses [of the four objects of mindfulness,] respectively: 1) the body object of mindfulness is **Buddhalocanā**; 2) the feeling object of mindfulness is **Pāṇḍaravāsinī**; In the maṇḍala, these are behind and to the right. 3) The mind object of mindfulness is **Māmākī**. 4) The phenomena object of mindfulness is **Tārā**. In the maṇḍala, these are to the left and in front. By the divisions of body, these [are two kinds of assembly places,] the places and sub-places. That these are “highly famed in the *Kālacakra*” means that they are not so well-known in other tantras, because, they were hidden by the Blessed One.

Similarly, for the [goddesses of the] seven limbs of enlightenment, the first is the consort **Vajradhātviśvarī**. The enlightened family place is the limb of true and pure equanimity. Regarding the other goddesses, **Śabdavajrā**, and so forth; 5) the limb of pure and true mindfulness is **Śabdavajrā**; 6) the limb of pure and true discrimination of phenomena is **Sparsāvajrā**; 7) the limb of pure and true exertion is **Rūpavajrā**; By the divisions of body, these [three] are the sub-fields. 8) the limb of pure and true joy is **Gandhavajrā**; 9) the limb of pure and true pliancy is **Rasavajrā**; 10) the limb of pure and true meditative absorption is **Dharmadhātuvajrā**. These [three] are the fields.

Likewise, “the water treasures are the four pure and true abandonments,” and the following goddesses: 12) abandoning so that evil deeds that have not arisen may not arise is **Carcikā**; 13) abandoning so that virtuous roots may abandon evil deeds that have arisen is **Viṣṇu Lady of the truth of cessation**; 14) abandoning so that virtues that have not yet arisen may arise is **Īśvarī**; 15)

abandoning so that virtues that have already arisen may be dedicated for the sake of attaining enlightenment is Great Glorious Lady. These [four] are the sub-garlands.

The other four water treasure goddesses are the four legs of miracle: 16) the aspiration leg of miracle **of the truth of cessation pervading space** is Bhramā Lady; 17) the exertion leg of miracle is Mastery Lady; 18) the mind leg of miracle is Vārāhī;¹²¹⁸ 19) the analysis leg of miracle is Kumārī.¹²¹⁹ These four are the garlands.

Likewise, the fierce ladies,¹²²⁰ are the five powers: 20) the power of faith is Atinīla;¹²²¹ 21) the power of exertion is Ativiryā;¹²²² 22) the power of mindfulness is Vajraṣṛiṃkhalā;¹²²³ 23) the power of meditative absorption is Ahaṃkāṛā;¹²²⁴ 24) the power of prajñā Cundā. These [five] are the sub-gathering places.

Similarly, the very clear and certain five strengths¹²²⁵ are a group of five: 25) strength of faith is Stambhanā;¹²²⁶ 26) strength of effort is Jambhanā;¹²²⁷ 27) strength of mindfulness is Marīci;¹²²⁸ 28) strength of meditative absorption is Bhṛkuṭi;¹²²⁹ and 29) strength of prajñā is Atilocanā;¹²³⁰ These [five] are the assembly places. [With the five powers just above,] they are a group of ten.

As for the “right” eight limbs of the path [of the noble ones,] it says, “the eight born from jealous gods who are lords of humans.”: 30) Dog Face Lady¹²³¹ is right view; 31) Vulture Face Lady¹²³² is right understanding; 32) Tiger Face Lady¹²³³ is right speech; 33) Owl Face Lady¹²³⁴ is right goals of action; 34) Jackal Face Lady¹²³⁵ is right livelihood; 35) right effort is Garuḍa Face Lady¹²³⁶; 36) Sow Face Lady¹²³⁷ is right mindfulness; and 37) Vulture Face Lady¹²³⁸ is right meditative absorption. In that way, yogins **of the truth of cessation who abide** in places on the earth should know that the thirty-seven divisions of [absolute] phenomena on the side of enlightenment of the places of the ‘other’ three realms, are all yoginīs **of the truth of cessation**. They are ‘other’ low-caste women,¹²³⁹ and so forth.

Similarly, the twelve kinds of assembly places, when purified by the thirty-seven phenomena on the side of enlightenment, **as the absolute twelve bodhisattva levels**, become characteristics of dharmakāya that **naturally abide in self-existence**. “Kye, lord of humans,¹²⁴⁰ similarly, externally and in the body, they **pervasively abide like space**.” So, all these are ascertained.

If you understand the divisions of the two truths here, you will not be confused about the Sage’s Word. The yoginīs of the natural state are the phenomena on the side of enlightenment that are included within the [absolute] truth of cessation, sugatagarbha. Pervasive like space, they abide both externally and within the body.

[On the other hand,] the yoginīs of the phenomena on the side of enlightenment belonging to the form kāyas and the truth of the path are compounded, incidental phenomena of relative truth.

When all incidental defilements are purified by the relative truth of the path, as their [absolute] ground, there are the naturally established places, and so forth. These represent the twelve aspects of the true meaning. These twelve have the nature of limitless, [absolute] qualities. [At that time,] abiding in primordially self-existing dharmakāya is attained. This is the pure and true meaning of the [Buddha's] great intention. Similarly, glorious Vajrapāṇi says:

According to the definitive meaning, in “binding the circle of ḍākinīs”¹²⁴¹ in the truth of cessation, the ḍākinīs, pervading space, are the thirty-seven phenomena on the side of enlightenment.

The assembly of ḍākinīs is a wheel¹²⁴² of the characteristics of dharmakāya that pervades space. The wheel has the nature of non-empty emptiness. The ḍākinīs are bound together as svābhavikakāya, whose nature is [absolute] compassion without reference point.

As taught there, the [thirty-seven] phenomena on the side of enlightenment are [aspects of] the primordially and naturally pure, absolute truth of cessation, and of dharmakāya that is inseparable from the ultimate svābhavikakāya, pervading space.

Similarly, Vajra KA, Vajra KHA, and so forth,¹²⁴³ of the truth of cessation have the nature of thirty-seven deities [of the consonants that are taught] in thirty-six kings of tantras. These and very many others, are taught to be the assembly of deities of the thirty-seven phenomena on the side of enlightenment. All of these, as many as there are, abide as perfectly established dharmatā, the pure, empty ground; because they are primordially devoid of phenomena of the imagined and dependent.

This ground is naturally and completely pure, luminous, self-existing, unborn, and free from defilements. It is the kāya of the nature or essence, svābhavikakāya, the great bliss and the great emptiness that is capable of manifesting all aspects.

The assembly of phenomena represented by these deities, are qualities that are aspects of dharmakāya. That collection is also called “the heap of phenomena.” As the noble one Mañjuśrī's¹²⁴⁴ *Brief Teaching of the Assertions of our own View* says:

The limitless heap of absolute phenomena
Is famed as the self,¹²⁴⁵ dharmakāya, pervading space.

And:

The heap of true phenomena, and likewise its kāya,
Is the famous collection of the pure and true.

The seventy-two goddesses of glorious great Cakrasaṃvara, **within the truth of cessation, pervading space**, are taught to be the seventy-two of the ten absolute perfections equal ten, then adding the ‘other’ five skandhas and five elements there are twenty, plus the twelve [of the six] objects and [six] perceivers of dharmatā makes thirty-two, plus five strengths and five powers of the truth of cessation equals forty-two and then with the ten levels, ten strengths, and ten powers, there are seventy-two.

The king of tantras, the *Kālacakra* says:

The **ten [perfections]**, generosity, and so forth, **of the truth of cessation**, with the ‘other’ **five** skandhas, **five** elements, **six** objects, **six** perceivers, and so forth; including the five powers, the phyogs, ten,¹²⁴⁶ levels, the phyogs, **ten**, powers, and the five strengths of the glorious buddha children; are **[seventy-two] primordially abiding**, completely purified goddesses **of the truth of cessation**.

Regarding “purified,” the grounds that are purified are included within the [absolute] truth of cessation. The defilements they are purified of are included in the [relative] truths of suffering and the origin of suffering. The purifying [antidotes] are included within the [relative] truth of the path. The fruition of purification is included within the primordially established [absolute] truth of cessation.

You should apprehend the way of this [in your own experience] from following the especially exalted oral instructions. **This will not be experienced by those who just read the words of the tantra without practicing the instructions.** Here is necessary to know the difference between the truth of cessation and its being attained [as realization] **by a certain individual [at a certain time]**. This is like the difference between [changeless] dharmakāya, and its being attained **by an individual [at a certain time.]** The same is true for: the naturally existing enlightened family, svābhavikakāya, sugatagarbha, the absolute, suchness, the pure and true ultimate, buddha nature, nirvāṇa, AHAM, EVAM, A, the great mother, mahāmudrā, the absolute deities, mantras, tantras, mudrās, maṇḍalas, **and the refuge objects** of Hevajra, Cakrasaṃvara, Guhyasamāja, and so forth.

For all of these many synonymous names with a single meaning, **it is necessary to know the difference between their [eternal] nature and that being attained [in the experience] of an individual [at a certain time].**

j'. **How All the Phenomena of the Completely Pure Four Noble Truths of Dharmatā, and So Forth, Abide as Absolute Deities**

Similarly, the Blessed One, who is abiding in the maṇḍala of the Dharmadhātu Lord of Speech, teaches the twelve levels, perfections, strengths, and meditative retentions **of the truth of cessation**, as well as the four individual, correct knowledges, to be deities of self-arising pristine wisdom.

In many other styles of profound mantra, Hevajra, Kālacakra, and so forth, ‘other’ phenomena that are qualities of the four noble truths, concentrations, immeasurables, and so forth, are likewise taught to be deities of dharmatā. When [you are] trying to understand the divisions of the two truths, and so forth, in the extremely many such presentations, [you] should know that the intention of “naturally, completely pure phenomena” is absolute phenomena.

Absolute phenomena are grounds of [relative] naturelessness like the ten powers and 84,000 heaps of phenomena. They are also [aspects of] mahāmudrā, in which ground and fruition are inseparable, the source of dharmas with the nature of the perfection of prajñā, and the field of dharmakāya.

As the blessed lord Avalokiteśvara, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, says:

Mahāmudrā, is the goddess Prajñāpāramitā, the producer of the buddhas, having the supreme of all aspects, the characteristics of natureless phenomena. Mahāmudrā is also called the “source of dharmas” from which all natureless phenomena arise. Natureless phenomena are those of the eighty-four thousand collections of [absolute] phenomena like the ten powers and four fearlessnesses. Their source of arising is the source of dharmas, the [absolute] buddha field pervading space. This is also the place [of abiding] of buddhas and bodhisattvas, the place of bliss, and the place of arising [of everything].

The source of dharmas is not the [relative bhaga,] the place from which blood, urine, and semen arise. The place of arising of the desire of saṃsāric beings and the field that is the birthplace of [relative desire and] desirelessness is not the buddha field of the tathāgatas. The source of dharmas has the [changeless] nature of dharmadhātu. It is free from obscuration at all times. It is also the consort of variety, Viśvamātā, embraced by Kālacakra.

Here, “the natureless phenomena of the ten powers, and so forth, arise,” refers to a way of [absolute] self-arising beyond worldly example, but without faults of contradiction, [when expressed in worldly discourse. Aspects of] the other-arisen pristine wisdoms, like the [relative] ten powers, and so forth that arise from the blessings [of the absolute ones] and the power of meditation, are compounded. Therefore, they are not dharmadhātu, nor are they the true nature of Viśvamātā, Kālacakra, and so forth. Thus, it is necessary to know the difference between the self-arising, [in absolute pristine wisdom,] of the source of dharmas and dharmadhātu, and the other-arising of the compounded pristine wisdom [of the path.]

The perfectly established four noble truths, and so forth, abide in dharmatā, the ground that is empty of relative truth and that is the ground of emptiness of the imagined and the dependent.

These primordially pure phenomena [too] are [personified as] many kinds of assemblies of self-arising pristine wisdom deities in secret mantra; but I have not written about them [in detail,] fearing it would take too many words. They are included in *Maitreya's saying in the Sublime Continuum*, "Not empty of inconceivable qualities of phenomena transcending in number the grains of sand of the river Ganges.

[In brief,] that text says that in the collection of qualities of the essence, sugatagarbha, [the eternal, absolute] buddha qualities are possessed by nature, while sugatagarbha's [relative] defilements are incidental, so that:

As it was before so it is later on,
The changeless essence of phenomena.

k'. **Teaching That Impure Relative Forms, and So Forth, are Not the Deities of Dharmatā**

Thus, you should distinguish by the correct view whatever is primordially and naturally pure as purity, and whatever is impure as impurity. [The pure is the absolute.] The impure is all forms and other phenomena included within its incidental defilements, [the relative.] The *Hevajra Tantra* says:

Blessed One, what is the impure? The Blessed One spoke saying,
"forms, and so forth. Why? Because they are [relative] real things of
grasper and grasped.

There, and so forth that is extensively taught. That teaching clears away what is maintained by some, that "pure" means "empty of its own essence," *along with recognizing and believing that*. All the relative real things included within grasper and grasped and the two obscurations are indeed empty of their own essences, but they are not pure. *The relative [logical] mind that recognizes them as empty of themselves is impure as well*. Thus, in well distinguishing and realizing what is and is not naturally completely pure, it is necessary to realize the difference between 1) [impure,] incidental defilements, *the way things [falsely] appear*, and 2) [pure] sugatagarbha, *the way things truly are*.

It is also necessary to realize that their different ways of being empty, [as emptiness of themselves and of other respectively.]

l'. **How Great Learned and Accomplished Ones Taught in That Way, Joining Together the Sūtras and Tantras**

The attainer of mahāmudrā, the venerable master glorious Nāropa, establishes that the intentions of the profound sūtras and mantra are not contradictory, but one and the same. As the *Hevajra Tantra* says:

The purity of all things
Is truly said to be suchness.
Below, with each division,¹²⁴⁷
The deities will be told.

[Nāropa's] commentary says:

“Other than those [relative things], and so forth,] is said of pure suchness and its divisions. At the beginning, the purity of suchness is taught. The glorious *Vajra Peak Tantra* says:

Please **tell** me, what is purity?¹²⁴⁸
 Not existent¹²⁴⁹ and not non-existent,¹²⁵⁰
 Not real¹²⁵¹ and not unreal,¹²⁵²
 Neither the speaker nor spoken,¹²⁵³
 It is pure, **great** nirvāṇa itself.

Of all things, and so forth, is said of the equal **ground**, pure suchness **with no conceptual grasping** of outer and inner conceptualized things. Always abiding like that, suchness – primordial, natural freedom from defilements – is said always to have an uncompounded nature, like space. Suchness should be meditated on **in two stages**.¹²⁵⁴ *The Suchness Chapter* in the glorious *Perfection of Prajñā*, says:

Just as the suchness of the Tathāgata is unchanging, completely unchanging, non-conceptual, completely non-conceptual, and indestructible by anything; likewise, the suchness of all phenomena of form, and so forth, is unchanging, completely unchanging, non-conceptual, completely non-conceptual, and indestructible by anything.

Why? The suchness of the Tathāgata and the suchness of all phenomena is only one. Suchness is not two, and it cannot be made two.

The same **great** commentary **by Nāropa** says:

By the divisions of the skandhas, and so forth, of the truth of cessation, the complete purity of the deities is subsequently realized. “The form skandha of the truth of cessation becomes [experience of] a vajra lady of the truth of cessation”, and so forth.

Well then, why are the senses, and so forth, said to be impure? It is taught that this is because of “obscurations of not knowing and the afflictive emotions.” Not knowing refers to ignorant, [dualistic preconceptions] and conceptually fixating [dualistic] thoughts of “I” and “mine.” Afflictive emotions are particular thoughts that cause actions to attain what is desired and [avoid what is] not desired. Obscuration by these [two] obscures **absolute sugatagarbha**. **[To attain enlightenment,] such thoughts** need to be purified. The glorious *Stainless Light* says:

Assemblies of ‘other’ things in empty space
 Completely abandon imputations of form;
 Seeing appearances like those of a princess,
 Seen by divination in a mirror.

Also:

The form skandha included in **primordially and naturally** world-transcending, **absolute** truth is the **primordially and naturally**, completely pure mirror-like pristine wisdom”...

“The consciousness skandha is the **primordially and naturally**, completely pure pristine wisdom of dharmadhātu.”

And again, the same text teaches:

The pristine wisdom of emptiness, capable of manifesting all aspects, has exhausted the [conditioned, temporary] bliss of sexual emission and obscurations of conception. It is the **primordial and natural** purity of the skandhas, sense constituents and sense sources.

Also, the glorious *Perfection of Prajñā* says in the *Chapter on Purity*:

Subhūti, the **primordial, natural** purity of form of the **absolute ground of purification that is the truth of cessation** is purity that is the fruition [of separation of] **purifying defilements by antidotes**.¹²⁵⁵
The purity of the fruition is the purity of [that absolute] form.

Subhūti, thus the purity of form and the purity of the fruition are not two, and cannot be made two. They are not separate, not different. Subhūti, it is the same for feelings, conceptualized perception, and formations. Subhūti, the purity of consciousness is the purity of the fruition. The purity of the fruition is the purity of consciousness.

The same text by Nāropa says, quoting from the *Vajra Tent of the Dākinīs*:

As the world is, so is buddhahood.
As the Dharmadhātu is not turbid,
So is the dhātu of sentient beings explained,
They are forever undefiled, like space.¹²⁵⁶

Unholy thoughts and [pollutions of] conception
Make the jewel that is the mind defiled;

B

ut when mind is purified, it is pure.

m'. **How Desire, and So Forth, and the Three Times, and So Forth, All Phenomena of Completely Pure Dharmatā, Abide as Absolute Deities**

The glorious *Tantra of the Supreme First Buddha* says:

Then, because he had attained the pure essence, the dharmatā of the Tathāgata, the Blessed One; Lord Avalokiteśvara spoke about the equality of all phenomena, the manner of the perfection of prajñā **pervading space that is** called “the mudrā of pristine wisdom.”

“Because of the **primordial, natural** purity of all desire **of the truth of cessation**, in the world **of the truth of cessation**, all hatred **of the**

truth of cessation is pure.¹²⁵⁷ Because of the purity of all defilements, all evil deeds in the world are pure. Because of the purity of all phenomena, all sentient beings in the world are pure. Because of the purity of all awareness, the perfection of prajñā in the world is pure....”

Also, the glorious *Hevajra Tantra* says of the qualities of the truth of cessation:

Hatred is said to be a vajra lady.
 Passion is a water yoginī.
 Jealousy is Vajra Ḍākinī.
 Greed is secretly Pāṇḍara[vāsinī].
 Stupidity also is a vajra lady.

There the hatred, and so forth, of completely pure dharmatā are taught to be goddesses of self-arising pristine wisdom. Likewise, the compounded, the three times, and other relative qualities are taught to be primordially, naturally, completely pure, [divine] realities of the truth of cessation. These can be apprehended from [seemingly paradoxical sayings of] the glorious tenth level bodhisattvas that are [in fact] without contradiction, like “Having all aspects and having none,” and “the realizer of the three times as timeless.”

n'. **How the Selfhood and Sentient Beings of Completely Pure Dharmatā also Abide as Absolute Deities**

The same is true for the meaning of primordial, natural, complete and total purity of [all the categories] from self and sentient being to the seer of the truth of cessation. They can all be realized as [aspects of] the previously taught ultimate self of the truth of cessation, the pure self of suchness, and so forth. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, as translated by Devacandra, says:

The Tathāgata nature or dhātu is the nature of a great being. By cutting off or annihilating the life of a sentient being, that sentient being is not killed. If a living being were killed in the truth of cessation, that ‘other’ living being of the truth of cessation would become forever non-existent, which is not possible. That ‘other’ “living being” of the truth of cessation is sugatagarbha itself. That eternal, absolute nature can never be destroyed, killed, or made forever non-existent. However, until buddhahood is attained, its complete purity cannot be seen.

These words teach the subject that is the great living being pervading space, the vajra life, the life of dharmatā, the ‘other’ living being, the completely pure living being, and so forth.

o'. **How Naturally Luminous Forms, and So Forth, Have the Same Meaning as Those Taught Above**

Similarly, The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, as translated by Devacandra, says:

Because forms of the truth of cessation are naturally luminous, without the omnipresent, afflictive emotions; they are **primordially, naturally**, completely pure....”

- p'. **How Forms, and So Forth that are Changeless, Without Arising and Cessation, Have the Same Meaning as Those Taught Above**

Also:

Primordial absence of transference and uniting [between successive moments of a continuum] is primordial, natural, complete purity...

and so forth, joining that teaching with all the categories from forms up to omniscience. That has the same meaning as teaching this [about the categories] from the forms of dharmatā to the omniscience of dharmatā. Fearing it would take too many words, I have not written of all the other categories, but these can be easily understood through the instructions for distinguishing what something is pure from and the ground of purity from that.

- q'. **Teaching That These Points are the Intention of the Extensive and Middle Length Mothers, and So Forth**

Likewise, Vasubandhu’s *Commentary on the Extensive, Middle Length and Eight Thousand Stanza Mothers* says:

“The **primordial, natural**, complete purity of form of the truth of cessation is the same as the **primordial, natural**, completely pure fruition that is causally separated from defilements by antidotes.”

That means that, [once defilements have been removed,] the causally perfected qualities of the truth of the path, the phenomena on the side of enlightenment, and so forth, called “the completely pure phenomena of the **undefiled**, completely pure fruition,” are not at all different¹²⁵⁹ from the [primordially,] perfectly established form, and so forth, of dharmatā, **the ground or essence**.

Then they are qualities of the kāya of the essence¹²⁶⁰ **where ground and fruition are inseparable**. They always abide in complete purity as the **primordial** fruition that is **naturally** completely pure **from defilements**. That solemn pronouncement should also be joined to all phenomena **of the inseparable ground and fruition**.

Also:

[The meaning of,] “Śāriputra, because [dharmatā] is completely pure and clear, complete purity and clarity appears,” is like this, for example: When there are no clouds, mist, or fog, the sun and the moon are very clear. They appear completely.

Likewise, appearance of the forms, and so forth, of dharmatā, and so forth, **up to omniscience of dharmatā**, is completely pure and

clear, when they are completely pure **from defilements**. That is why it is said, “because they are completely pure, complete purity appears.”

The meaning of “Blessed One, complete purity is not transference and [uniting between successive moments of a continuum,]” is that, by having abandoned the proliferating complexities of afflictive emotions and dualistic conceptions, [successive defiled moments of the continuum of a sentient being] are no longer transferred [to or from being the present moment of that continuum] or united [in a succession]. That happens because there is complete purity – **both purity by nature and purity from incidental defilements**.

The meaning of, “Śāriputra, for forms **of the truth of cessation** there is no transference and uniting [between successive moments of a continuum] so that they are completely pure,” is that the **incidental** forms, and so forth, of the imagined are completely abandoned. Then they have no further transference. That is the solemn pronouncement **explained as both purity by nature and purity from incidental defilements**.

The meaning of, “Blessed One, complete purity is the absence of afflictive emotions,” is that, as the nature of the sky is pure, even when there are clouds, mist, and fog; **our own essence**, like space that is capable of manifesting all aspects, is always **naturally** completely pure [of defilements.]

The meaning of, “Blessed One, **primordial, natural** complete purity is not an attainer with [attainment of] complete realization,” is that if two [separate] phenomena of attainer and attained existed; [conceptualized, dualistic] attainment would also exist. If [separate] realizer and realized existed, [separate, conceptualized] “complete realization” would also exist.

If so, within that realization, **the ground [of nihilistic self-emptiness] in which** imagined conceptions and conceptions **of dependence are just [nihilistically] absent** would be perfectly established dharmatā.

However, dharmatā is perfectly established. Attainment of that **primordial, natural**, complete purity **has no separate natures of attained and attainer. It has no realization with separate natures of realizer and realized.**¹²⁶¹

The meaning of, “Blessed One, **primordial, natural** purity is completely unestablished,” is that imagined imputations and conceptions of dependence regarding phenomena of form, and so forth, are completely pure [primordially], without that purity [needing to be] established. Since that is postulated, these phenomena have the characteristic of [primordial] non-establishment.

The meaning of “Complete purity does not arise in the realms of

desire, form, and the formless,” is that the realms of desire, form, and the formless are [mere,] imagined imputation. When someone is not [seemingly] born and does not [seemingly] arise in those realms, that is called “complete purity. That is so because that [person] does not observe the nature of desire realm, and so forth. Therefore, it is taught **that complete purity is the same as both natural purity and natural freedom from defilements.**

Also, similarly:

Even at the time of the **occasion** of a sentient being, tathāgatagarbha is naturally, completely pure. It completely excludes the omnipresent, afflictive emotions [of the relative]. Even at the time of transformation [into a realized being], tathāgatagarbha is [changeless], like space. Nothing arises that was not there before. Therefore, this essence **is forever, naturally pure.** It is taught to be **a nature in which ground and fruition are forever inseparable. It is not a newly created** nature that is afflicted **earlier** and purified **later.**

The meaning being taught is that the forms, and so forth, of perfectly established dharmatā are primordially and naturally pure within that ground. They are [primordially and naturally] empty and exclusive of the imagined and dependent natures. You should certainly look at the extensive explanation of this in Vasubandhu’s *Great Commentary*.

r'. **How These Pure Phenomena also Abide as the Mantras, Tantras, Maṇḍalas and Mudrās of the Way Things Are**

The primordially and naturally completely pure forms, and so forth, **up to the qualities of buddhahood** of dharmatā are all deities of dharmatā. Therefore, they all abide primordially and naturally as self-established mantras, tantras, maṇḍalas, and mudrās **pervading the space** of dharmatā.

3'. **How Forms, and So Forth, Transcending the Three Realms and Three Times are Similar**

Forms of **the truth of cessation** are not included in the desire realm, form realm, or formless realm. Those forms that are not included there are also not forms of the past, future, or present.

That teaching is joined with the topics up to omniscience. Then, joining these topics with dharmatā that does not deteriorate, but always abides in eternal equanimity, it says that these forms are not [phenomena with relative merit] to be dedicated [for the attainment of enlightenment:]

These forms **of the truth of cessation** that are not included in the desire realm, form realm, or formless realm, and are also not forms of the past, future, or present. Therefore, they are not something with the kind of apprehension and characteristics that can be dedicated. Why not? [From the viewpoint of the relative,] they are natureless. What is natureless is an unreal non-thing. Since an

unreal non-thing is unreal, it cannot [be associated with relative merit that could be] dedicated [to attaining enlightenment.]

This teaching is applied to the topics up to omniscience joining them with dharmatā that never deteriorates, but abides in eternal equanimity. The protector Maitreya includes all these topics in things “not belonging to the three realms.” These are the same as the previously taught forms of dharmatā, and so forth, of the Chapter on complete Purity. They are taught as profound emptiness [of other] that is far from materialistic, nihilistic self-emptiness. They are also taught as the limitless assembly of deities of the fundamental nature that is the way things are.

In the *Hundred Thousand Stanza Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra*, the topics from form to the eighteen unshared qualities of a buddha are taught to be primordially world-transcending, and uncompounded. Hence, they are without [relative] virtues, faults, contaminations, afflictive emotions, and purification. They are entirely inseparable from the essence. There, and so forth, proper discrimination of them is taught.

In the *Middle Length Mother*, all phenomena from “virtue” [onwards] are said to be uncompounded, hence inseparable from the essence. The intention is all absolute phenomena, so this teaching is suitably joined to all the topics of the absolute from form to omniscience. Up to there, this summary is taught. The reasons for realization of the profound pith of the absolute way things are can be reached in that way.

4'. **Teaching That If These Phenomena are Not Understood in This Way, Buddhahood Will Not be Attained by Meditating on Emptiness of Self**

Thus, those who maintain that there is no kind of profound emptiness except things' emptiness of their own natures are far from the intention of the Victorious One. The king of tantras, the *Kālacakra*, says:

“In absolute truth, the three realms are not form composed of atoms, but rather these three realms are merely consciousness. Likewise, consciousness itself is non-existent and natureless. The prajñā of the buddhas, not established as any kind of object or mind at all, does not abide anywhere.” These words are what enlightened ones teach.

What is [actually] changeless, supreme bliss, people grasp as [self-]emptiness. In that way they view everything as empty of its own essence. Hence, so that this fault may be abandoned, whoever is a leader [in Dharma] teaches the pure, changeless,¹²⁶² natural bliss and the [conditioned] bliss of melting¹²⁶³ of the body¹²⁶⁴ of the coemergent two truths [taught] in the mantra vehicle.

And:

Some who bind wind, mind, and bindu [in the practice of tantric

yoga,] say that the [ultimate] Lord of Victorious Ones is changing and created. They say that he certainly arose, was born from a womb, and so forth, according to the truths of suffering and origin. From the power of the pristine wisdom of the truth of the path, they become habituated to individual days.¹²⁶⁵ By that, they cannot have the certain arising of the [timeless] ‘other’ that is release from saṃsāra. That ‘other’ is completely free from momentary [phenomena], and from all changes of winds, mind, and bindu, so that it is motionless.

Abandoning that kind of [unconditioned] buddha activity, separating themselves from blissful equality, they meditate on [self-]emptiness in which everything is empty of itself. Such emptiness is different from the absolute’s emptiness of other. With such a view and meditation, they are many millions of eons away from the enlightened approach to the two truths of buddhahood itself, with the coemergence of natural bliss and the [causally purified] bliss of melting as the pure bliss of fruition.

For example, as grapes do not grow from a nimpa plant, as a mud-born lotus does not bloom on a mulberry tree, and as amṛita does not develop from poison; non-dwelling nirvāṇa does not arise from the kind of emptiness where everything is empty of its own essence.

Likewise, bliss is not attained from the power of non-virtue. Siddhis are not attained from the power of killing living beings [through sacrificial offerings, as many Hindus believe.] From offerings of killing cattle, [neither] the cattle [nor those who sacrifice them] go to the celestial realms. Similarly, by bare tranquil resting in nothingness that merely represses the senses, the level of supreme peace, the absolute, cannot be attained. Merely from familiarity with the Hindu Vedas, the speech of omniscience, with the nature of all language, cannot be attained. Nor can changeless, motionless bliss, mahāmudrā, be attained from the changeable winds, channels, and bindu of impure mind....¹²⁶⁶

Also, Mañjuśrī’s *Brief Teaching of What is Explained in our own View* says:

The emptiness that comes analyzing the skandhas,¹²⁶⁷
Like a plantain tree, is without a heart.¹²⁶⁸
Emptiness that has the supreme of all aspects,
Of the highest essence, is not like that.¹²⁶⁹

This unborn and ceaseless object of knowledge
Here is seen by pristine wisdom itself.
The reality of the ground of emptiness,¹²⁷⁰
Is not analysis of the empty skandhas.¹²⁷¹

5'. **Resolving How Things Are, After Abandoning Many Scriptural Contradictions**

Objection: If dharmadhātu, suchness, the pure and true ultimate, and all such things are not empty of themselves, what is the intention of the *Mother of the Victorious Ones* saying:

Dharmadhātu is empty of Dharmadhātu.

Suchness is empty of suchness.

The pure and true ultimate is empty of the pure and true ultimate.

The inconceivable dhātu is empty of the inconceivable dhātu.

And:

The perfection of prajñā is empty of the perfection of prajñā. What is empty is not the perfection of prajñā. It is unborn.... Omniscience of all aspects is empty of omniscience of all aspects. What is empty is not omniscience of all aspects. It is unborn.¹²⁷²

And:

If even the perfection of prajñā is totally non-existent, how could coming and going exist in it?

Answer: Those passages are taught with the hidden intention that they are of the provisional meaning.¹²⁷³ The *Sūtra that Definitively Comments on the Intention* says:

The Blessed One composed [sūtras teaching] that that there is no essence of phenomena, there is no arising, there is no cessation, and there is peace from the beginning. He composed [sūtras teaching] that that there is natural nirvāṇa. For those who were purely and truly abiding in the Great Vehicle, he turned a very wondrous, marvelous second wheel of Dharma with the manner of speaking about [self]-emptiness. That wheel of Dharma turned by the Blessed One is surpassable, is an occasion for elimination by criticism, is provisional, and is a ground of controversy.

Depending on the lamp of the extraordinary instructions for good discrimination, all teachings in one or another text of the middle turning saying that whatever is not empty of itself [in the relative] is empty of itself in the absolute should be understood to have the hidden intention that they are provisional. [In those instructions,] it says that the purpose of those teachings is to pacify completely [all] fixation of conceptualized perception, conceptual thoughts about dharmadhātu and the various other topics of the absolute.

Teachings that self-emptiness is the definitive meaning are refuted, because dharmadhātu, suchness, the pure and true ultimate, and so forth, are taught to be: the ultimate four kāyas of buddhahood pervading space, the five pristine wisdoms, the syllable E, the bhaga, the source of dharmas, the water-grown lotus of purity, the secret, the great secret, the syllable A, the goddess Prajñāpāramitā, the variety consort Viśvamātā, Vajravārāhī, and so forth, as well as VAM, the great bliss, bindu, vajra, heruka,

suchness, self-arisen buddhahood, and so forth, and, Vajradhara, Vajrasattva, EVAM, Kālacakra, Vajra-Bhairava, Vajraiśvara, Cakrasaṃvara, Guhyasamāja, Hevajra, and so forth.

All [these different aspects of the absolute] are taught to be absolute deities, mantras **pervading space**, tantras, maṇḍalas, and mudrās, **The absolute four kāyas and the five pristine wisdoms** are also taught to be dharmatā, suchness, **the pure and true ultimate**, and so forth, **as above**.

Regarding the ground of that intention, these words were taught with the intention that [discriminating, conceptual] apprehension of dharmadhātu, and so forth, all such absolute dharmin, [also involve assertions] about relative phenomena that are empty of themselves. That is because all phenomena of form, and so forth, are taught to be within one of the three natures. [Perfectly established, absolute phenomena are not empty of themselves, because they have a real, experiential referent.] Imagined and dependent phenomena of the relative are taught to be empty of themselves. **It should be understood that the [so-called] “nature” of imagined and dependent phenomena is just a generalized image in the mental sense.** With no existent, experiential referents, these **generalizations that are self-empty are what is referred to by [all] names.**

The *Mother* appears to teach self-emptiness when it says:

Because dharmadhātu does not exist, bodhisattvas do not apprehend a prior limit [in time for phenomena]. Because suchness, the pure and true ultimate, and the inconceivable dhātu do not exist; bodhisattvas do not apprehend a prior limit in time for phenomena.

Like the citations cited above [where the Buddha seems to advocate self-emptiness,] this teaching is provisional, because it has a [hidden] intention. This passage above was taught with the [hidden] intention that Dharmadhātu, suchness, and so forth, are not non-existent themselves. However, the essences of all incidental phenomena other [than Dharmadhātu, suchness, and so forth] are non-existent within them. The purpose [of teaching this] is, as already explained. As a refutation of such passages that advocate self-emptiness being of the definitive meaning, the *Mother of the victorious ones* also says:

Whether tathāgatas arise or not, the suchness of these phenomena, the unerring suchness, the placeless suchness, dharmatā, dharmadhātu, the realm of Dharma, the faultless Dharma,¹²⁷⁴ the pure and true ultimate, and the inconceivable dhātu **always completely** abide as such. These are without relative self, sentient beings, the life of beings, transmigrating beings, living beings, persons, individuals, the power of beings, a self with the power of beings, a doer, a feeler, a knower, and a seer.

Then how could they have **relative** form?... How could they have

aging and death? How could they have interdependently arising phenomena? If these [relative] phenomena do not exist, how could there be **relative** sentient beings to be liberated from the five¹²⁷⁵ realms of saṃsāric beings?

Also, the *Bodhisattva Piṭaka Sūtra* within the *Jewel Heap Sūtra* says:

Moreover, omnipresent emptiness exists absolutely as the fundamental nature of things. [However,] this fundamental nature is empty of relative selves, sentient beings, living beings, persons, and individuals. They are non-existent in that fundamental nature.

The ground of emptiness, suchness itself, is never empty [of itself,] but the phenomena of the imagined and the dependent are primordially [empty of themselves and, therefore, they are] non-existent within it. [Suchness] is the ground of their emptiness. That is, [suchness] is empty of other. With the same approach, the *Mother* says:

What is this emptiness of other real things? Whether tathāgatas arise or not, the true way of phenomena, dharmatā, dharmadhātu, the faultlessness of phenomena, suchness, unerring suchness, suchness that is not other, and the pure and true ultimate, **always** abide like that, **in the same way later as they did before**. The absolute's emptiness of these phenomena that are things other than itself is called "emptiness of other real things."

Also, [Vasubandhu's] *Commentary* says:

Within these phenomena **that are [absolutely] existent**, are other [relative] phenomena, the skandhas, and so forth that do not exist as real things. [Since that is so, they are empty of themselves, and] their [emptiness within the absolute] is called its "emptiness of other real things."

That is well-explained. Thus, the way of dharmatā, suchness, being emptiness is not by its being empty of itself, but by its being the ground of emptiness of other things. Here, the way of abiding of phenomena, with its many synonyms, is the pure and true ultimate. Whether the form kāyas of buddhas appear in the world or not, whether individuals in the world realize and see these ultimate phenomena or not, these [absolute] phenomena are indestructible, changeless suchness that should not be abandoned. Without differences of earlier and later, they abide as eternal, partless, omnipresent, and all-pervading. That is the meaning of their not being empty of themselves.

As for their being empty of other real things [of the relative], these [absolute realities] are empty of the phenomena of imagined imputed things like **relative** selves, sentient beings, and the life of sentient beings, transmigrating beings, living beings, persons, [and saṃsāric sentient beings.]

[The way things are] is empty of [dualistic] forms, and so forth, the [delusive] dependent phenomena experienced by these saṃsāric sentient beings as they cycle within the five realms of transmigrating beings. These are all the interdependently arising phenomena of the skandhas, sense constituents, and sense sources of the relative. Their emptiness of themselves within the way things are is the meaning of “emptiness of other real things.” It is also the meaning of saying, “When something is empty of something, the first is empty of the second. What remains, or the ground of emptiness, always exists.” With this approach the *Mother* says:

Because dharmadhātu does not exist [relatively], bodhisattvas do not apprehend a prior limit [in time for relative phenomena.]
Because suchness, the pure and true ultimate, and the inconceivable dhātu do not exist [relatively], bodhisattvas do not apprehend a prior limit [in time for relative phenomena].

The approach to emptiness taught there is not emptiness of self, but emptiness of other. Similarly, it says there:

Since dharmadhātu is exclusive, bodhisattvas do not apprehend a prior limit [in time for relative phenomena.] Because suchness, the pure and true ultimate, and the inconceivable dhātu are exclusive, bodhisattvas do not apprehend a prior limit [in time for relative phenomena.]

What is taught there is not self-exclusion. [The absolute] excludes other, [relative] things. In the many occasions of the unestablished, the pure, the completely pure, the totally pure, cessation and the ceasing, exhaustion, freedom from, liberation, complete purification, abandoning, and so forth, we must be mindful again and again of the profound piths of the well-explained extraordinary instructions of emptiness.

These distinguish the meaning of something being empty of its own reality and other realities; empty emptiness and non-empty emptiness; the emptiness of unreal things and the emptiness of the [real] essence that is empty of unreal things; mere emptiness of phenomena that are negated and their emptiness in the ground of emptiness, dharmatā, suchness, and so forth, all of its many synonyms. These distinctions should be well understood. Similarly, it is taught:

Omniscience is empty of [relative] omniscience. Knowing the aspects of the path is empty of [relative] knowledge of aspects of the path. Knowledge of all aspects is empty of [relative] knowledge of all aspects.

And:

If a Tathāgata’s ten powers, four fearlessnesses, four individual correct knowledges, and eighteen unshared qualities are totally non-existent and unobserved, how could establishment of them exist?

And:

If a Tathāgata, an arhat, a truly, completely enlightened buddha is totally non-existent and unobserved, how could establishment of one exist?

And:

A Tathāgata's powers, fearlessnesses, individual correct knowledges, and unshared buddha qualities are empty of [relative] unshared buddha qualities. Why? In emptiness, the [relative] topics from the noble truths to the unshared buddha qualities are non-existent. Bodhisattvas do not exist....

Also:

Because [relative] omniscience does not exist, bodhisattvas do not apprehend a prior limit in time. Because [relative] omniscience is empty, excluded, and natureless, bodhisattvas do not apprehend a prior limit in time.

In these passages, it is necessary to distinguish well the approaches of 1) self-emptiness of unreal things [themselves] and 2) the essence of unreal things that is empty of [other unreal things that are self-empty.] If you understand the divisions of the two truths, you will not be deluded about the Sage's word concerning: omniscience, knowledge of the aspects of the path, knowledge of all aspects, the powers and fearlessnesses, the individual correct knowledges, the unshared buddha qualities, and so forth.

Because the absolute ten powers, and so forth, are [aspects of] the ground of emptiness, the uncompounded dhātu itself, they are ultimate entities of the truth of cessation. Because the relative ten powers, and so forth, are compounded and impermanent, they are included in the truth of the path, and they are empty of themselves.

There is no contradiction in teaching that all things that are empty of themselves are empty of themselves. However, there can scarcely be no contradiction in teaching that all things that are not empty of themselves are empty of themselves. As explained above, such teachings should be understood as provisional teachings with a [hidden] intention. With such a hidden intention, the exalted *Great Dum Sūtra* says:

"Blessed One, in the Great Vehicle there are many sūtras that teach the meaning of emptiness."

The Blessed one spoke saying, "All of those [sūtras] that teach emptiness of everything of its own nature should be known to **be of the provisional meaning and to be taught with a [hidden] intention. [However, some sūtras'] teaching distinguishes between things being empty and non-empty of their own essences.** These unsurpassable sūtras should be known not **to be of the provisional**

meaning and not to have a [hidden] intention....

Regarding [phenomena that are] included within the compounded and impermanent, the great *Mother* says:

Subhūti, among compounded phenomena, there are the phenomena included in the realms of desire, form, and the formless. There are also phenomena other than those that are [associated with the relative form kāyas and that are] included within the truth of the path. These include: the four objects of mindfulness, the four correct abandonments, the four legs of miracle, the five powers, the five strengths, the seven limbs of enlightenment, the eight-limbed path of the noble ones, the four noble truths, the four meditative concentrations, the four immeasurables, the four formless meditative equilibriums, the eight liberations, the nine successive meditative absorptions, emptiness, all emptinesses, marklessness, wishlessness, the five higher perceptions, the six perfections, all meditative absorptions, all gates of meditative retention, a Tathāgata's ten powers, four fearlessnesses, four individual correct knowledges, great lovingkindness, great compassion, and unshared eighteen qualities.

All these are compounded phenomena. These compounded, [relative phenomena] from the four objects of mindfulness to the unshared qualities of a buddha are included with the [relative] truth of the path. They are empty of themselves. Similarly, The *Sūtra of the Meeting of Father and Son*, within the *Jewel Heap Sūtra*, says:

"The Buddha belonging to the truth of the path" is just [empty] jargon. Likewise, the Sage teaches that the [corresponding] powers, pristine wisdoms, and four fearlessnesses are relative.¹²⁷⁶

Also, the *Mother* says:

All the texts within the truth of the path called the *Perfection of Prajñā* are impermanent. They cannot be separated from that....¹²⁷⁷

Up to:

The eighteen unshared qualities of a buddha are impermanent. They cannot be separated from that.

Also:

Because they are included in the [relative] truth of the path, which is not the same as the [absolute] truth of cessation of buddhahood, [the topics] from the perfection of generosity up to the eighteen unshared qualities of a buddha cannot be perfected in unsurpassable, true, complete enlightenment.

Why, Subhūti? It is like this: All these phenomena of the truth of the path are compounded. They are compounded in manifestations. Phenomena that are compounded and are compounded

manifestations can never attain inseparability from the omniscience of the truth of cessation. The point is that the truth of the path and the truth of cessation do not have the same essence.

Nevertheless, Subhūti, all these [compounded, relative] phenomena serve as phenomena of producing and practicing the path. However, they are not [employable] as attainment of the fruition.¹²⁷⁸

[On the other hand, in the *Stainless Light*,] the blessed Lord of the World, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, teaches about the absolute, uncompounded ten powers, and so forth that are included within the truth of cessation:

Mahāmudrā possesses the characteristics of all natureless phenomena, and it possesses the supreme of all aspects, the goddess Prajñāpāramitā, the creatress of the buddhas.

Mahāmudrā is also called the “source of dharmas,” meaning the source from which all natureless phenomena arise. These natureless phenomena are the 84,000 heaps of buddha qualities of the ten powers, four fearlessnesses, and so forth. They arise from the source of dharmas, the [absolute] buddha field. That is the place of the buddhas and bodhisattvas and the place of bliss.

The physical [bhaga] which gives rise to blood, urine, and sexual fluids is not that [ultimate] source of dharmas. The field of [the relative desire and] desirelessness of saṃsāric beings is not the [absolute] field of the tathāgatas.

The source of dharmas, whose nature is dharmadhātu, is the consort of variety, Viśvamātā, embraced by the blessed one Kālacakra. She is forever free from obscurations....

Also, the victorious Maitreya says in the *Sublime Continuum*:

The first of the kāyas is endowed with
the separated qualities like the powers.

There it says that, because all the qualities of uncompounded dharmakāya are attained merely by separating them from incidental defilements, they are called “separated qualities.” The thirty-two summarized here, “like the powers,” are the principal ones. The extensive divisions of their aspects are countless and limitless:

It¹²⁷⁹ is luminous, unproduced, and inseparably
merged,¹²⁸⁰ as the possessor of all qualities,
Of buddhahood, Beyond the number of all
The particles of sand in the river Ganges.

And:

It is empty of incidental phenomena
That have the characteristic of being separable.
It is not empty of unsurpassable phenomena

That have the characteristic of being inseparable.

The commentary quotes the *Sūtra of Queen Śrīmāla-devī*:

Therefore, tathāgatagarbha is empty of all divisible, separable sheaths of the afflictive emotions, but it is not empty of the indivisible, inseparable, inconceivable qualities of buddhahood, transcending in number the grains of sand in the river Ganges.

Then the Commentary says:

The undefiled buddha qualities **belonging to the truth of cessation** definitively exist inseparably **with sugatagarbha**, even within those on the levels of sentient beings afflicted with the all-encompassing afflictive emotions. Dharmatā is without difference before and after the fruition is attained. Therefore, this topic is inconceivable.

So, it is taught by the venerable noble one Asaṅga. The, eighty-four thousand heaps of absolute phenomena, the ten powers, and so forth, **are [absolute phenomena] within the essence that is the ground**. All these inconceivable qualities of buddhahood transcending in number the grains of sand of the river Ganges, are inseparable and indivisible from the source of dharmas, dharmadhātu, suchness, [their personifications,] the goddesses Mahāmudrā, Prajñāpāramitā, and the variety consort Viśvamātā.

However, they are do not have **the self-empty** natures **[of the unreal things] of the relative**. Because these qualities of the uncompounded, pure, and true ultimate are not empty of themselves, their emptiness is that of the ground of emptiness, the essence of unreal things, the non-empty emptiness of other things.

Also, the great *Mother* says:

Subhūti, regarding “uncompounded phenomena,” phenomena that are unborn and undestroyed and never change from the way they are into something else, are: suchness in which passion, aversion, and ignorance are **primordially and naturally** exhausted; unerring suchness; suchness that is not other; dharmatā; dharmadhātu; faultless Dharma; the inconceivable dhātu; the pure and true ultimate. Subhūti, such phenomena are called “uncompounded phenomena.”

Also, **the Middle Length Mother** says:

Śāradvatiputra, moreover all phenomena **of the truth of cessation** are **primordial and natural** goodness.

All these phenomena are faultless.

All these phenomena are without contamination.

All these phenomena are unafflicted.

All these phenomena are completely purified.

All these phenomena are world-transcending.

All these phenomena are uncompounded.

They are never purified, and so forth, by being separated from anything that is abandoned by antidotes.

These qualities [of the absolute essence] are not relative qualities. The phrase, “naturally world-transcending and completely pure, uncompounded qualities transcending in number the grains of sand in the river Ganges,” should be understood through the above passages, as well as through the extensive teachings of the *Mother* that individually join to these points all the topics from form to the unshared eighteen phenomena [of a buddha.]

Similarly, the following passage from the *Sūtra of the Inconceivable Realm of Buddhahood* in the *Jewel Heap Sūtra* is well-explained by the previous explanation:

O monks, the unborn, unarisen, unproduced, completely uncompounded, and utterly uncompounded exists, as the ground, suchness. O monks, the unborn, unarisen, unproduced, completely uncompounded, and utterly uncompounded, is not non-existent, as the ground, suchness.

6'. **Teaching That, in Attaining These [Qualities], These Impure Skandhas Must Cease**

These absolute qualities of buddhahood, transcending in number the grains of sand of the river Ganges, such as the ten powers without [relative] nature, as well as the [absolute] form, and so forth, of dharmatā, are by nature self-existing and complete. They are taught to be attained by the cessation of [relative] form, and so forth that incidentally defile [and obscure] them. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

The Blessed one spoke to all-knowing Kauṇḍinya saying, Forms of the truths of suffering and origin are impermanent. By the condition of forms of the truths of suffering and origin ceasing through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated, eternally-abiding forms of the truth of cessation, pervading space, are attained.

Feelings, conceptualized perceptions, formations, and consciousness of the truths of suffering and origin are also impermanent. By the conditions of cessation through which [feelings, conceptualized perceptions, formations, and consciousness] of the truths of suffering and origin cease through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated, eternally-abiding [feelings, conceptualized perceptions, formations, and consciousness] of the truth of cessation, pervading space, are attained.

Kauṇḍinya, forms of the truths of suffering and origin are suffering. By the condition of forms of the truths of suffering and origin ceasing through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated,

blissful forms of the truth of cessation are attained. Feelings, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness should also be extensively known like that.

Kauṇḍinya, forms of the truths of suffering and origin are empty of their own essences. By the condition of empty forms ceasing through the truth of the path, the completely liberated [non-empty] forms of the truth of cessation are attained. Feelings, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness should also be extensively known like that.

Kauṇḍinya, forms of the truths of suffering and origin do not have the two kinds of [relative] selfhood. By the condition of forms of the truths of suffering and origin ceasing through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated forms of the truth of cessation with pure and true selfhood, are attained. Feelings, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness should also be extensively known like that.

Kauṇḍinya, forms of the truths of suffering and origin are completely impure. By the condition of forms of the truths of suffering and origin ceasing through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated forms of the truth of cessation that are completely pure are attained. Feelings, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness should also be extensively known like that.

Kauṇḍinya, forms of the truths of suffering and origin are born, age, become ill, and die. By the condition of forms of the truths of suffering and origin ceasing through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated forms of the truth of cessation that are not born, and do not age, become ill, and die are attained. Feelings, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness should also be extensively known like that.

Kauṇḍinya, forms of the truths of suffering and origin are [those of] ignorance. By the condition of forms of the truths of suffering and origin ceasing through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated forms of the truth of cessation that are not those of ignorance are attained. Feelings, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness should also be extensively known like that.

Kauṇḍinya, forms of the truths of suffering and origin are causes of birth. By the condition of forms of the truths of suffering and origin ceasing through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated forms of the truth of cessation that are unborn are attained. Feelings, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness should also be extensively known like that.

Kauṇḍinya, forms of the truths of suffering and origin are causes of the four misapprehensions. By the condition of forms of the truths of

suffering and origin ceasing through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated forms of the truth of cessation that are not causes of the four misapprehensions are attained. Feelings, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness should also be extensively known like that.

Kauṇḍinya, forms of the truths of suffering and origin are causes of innumerable phenomena of non-virtue, as follows: Desire for the bodies of men, women, and so forth, and for food; hatred, stupidity, greed, and jealousy; non-virtuous attitudes; avaricious attitudes; food¹²⁸¹ of bondage; food of consciousness; food of conceptual thoughts; food of contact; [the four kinds of] birth from an egg, womb, heat and moisture, or spontaneously; the five desires [for the objects of the five senses;] the five obscurations, and so forth. By the condition of forms of the truths of suffering and origin ceasing through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated forms of the truth of cessation, bodies without all these faults and defects are attained. Feelings, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness should also be extensively known like that.

Kauṇḍinya, forms are bound by bondage. By the condition of bound forms of the truths of suffering and origin ceasing through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated forms of the truth of cessation that are without bondage are attained. Feelings, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness should also be extensively known like that.

Kauṇḍinya, forms of the truths of suffering and origin are causes of continuous suffering. By the condition of bound forms of the truths of suffering and origin ceasing through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated forms of the truth of cessation that are without continuous suffering are attained. Feelings, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness should also be extensively known like that.

Kauṇḍinya, forms of the truths of suffering and origin are neither causes of refuge nor objects of refuge. By the condition of forms of the truths of suffering and origin ceasing through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated forms of the truth of cessation that are objects of [absolute] refuge pervading space are attained. Feelings, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness should also be extensively known like that.

Kauṇḍinya, forms of the truths of suffering and origin are like wounds. By the condition of bound forms of the truths of suffering and origin ceasing through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated forms of the truth of cessation that are without wounds are attained. Feelings, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness should also be extensively known like that.

Kauṇḍinya, forms of the truths of suffering and origin are not

peaceful. By the condition of bound forms of the truths of suffering and origin ceasing through the truth of the path, the primordially liberated forms of the truth of cessation that are utterly peaceful nirvāṇa are attained. Feelings, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness should also be extensively known like that.

Kauṇḍinya, whatever individual of the truths of suffering and origin knows in such a way, according to the way things are that is presented by the four truths, is called “a virtuous practitioner” or “a brahmin.”¹²⁸² Such a person is said to be endowed with the qualities of a virtuous practitioner or a brahmin.

Kauṇḍinya, aside from the Buddhadharma, there are no virtuous practitioners or brahmins. There is no Dharma of virtuous practitioners or brahmins. All non-Buddhist extremists speak falsehoods and do not have pure conduct.¹²⁸³ Though indeed they pretend to have these two aspects of virtuous practitioners and brahmins, they are not really possessors of these two aspects. Why? How could they be virtuous practitioners or brahmins without the Dharma of virtuous practitioners or brahmins?

So speaking, I always proclaim the lion’s roar of absolute sugatagarbha to the circle of retinue. You too should always proclaim the lion’s roar¹²⁸⁴ of absolute sugatagarbha to the circle of retinue.

Here, because forms, and so forth that are defilements that are properly abandoned are refutable, they are empty of themselves. Within the ground of these forms that cease through the truth of the path, there are the eternally abiding, absolute forms, and so forth, of sugatagarbha. Since these are its [inseparable] natural luminosity, they are not to be abandoned. They are empty not of themselves, but of other.

7'. **Teaching That When These are Attained, the ‘Other’ EVAM, and So Forth, All the Aspects of the Profound Way Things Are, are Attained**

What is attained by cessation of the continuous [self-proliferation] of the forms, and so forth, of incidental obscuration whose nature is impermanence, suffering, emptiness, untruth, impurity, ignorance, and so forth?

What is attained is [revelation of] the absolute forms, and so forth, of sugatagarbha that are other than these outer and inner phenomena of the relative. They are also taught to be: Vajrasattva pervading space, Vajrapadma, vajra semen and vajra menstrual blood, the vajra moon and vajra sun, the vajra knower and vajra known, the vajra vowels and consonants, and so forth, and the nature of EVAM, as the primordially

inseparable mixture into one taste of the five topics of the changeless, great emptiness, and the changeless six empty drops. [Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's] *Great Commentary on the Kālacakra Tantra, [the Stainless Light]* says:

Here the fourteen syllables [that begin the Kālacakra Tantra,] stong pa ye shes kyang [ste] thig le mchog dang rdo rje 'dzin pa, "Empty pristine wisdom, also drop, supreme and vajra holding," describe the great being of the six elements, and so forth, by the word stong pa, "empty," as follows:

1. The 'other' pristine wisdom skandha, *Vajrasattva*,
2. the 'other' consciousness skandha, *Akṣobhya*,
3. the 'other' wisdom constituent, *Viśvamātā*,
4. the 'other' space element, *Vajradhātviśvarī*,
5. the 'other' mental, *Samantabhadra*,
6. the 'other' ear, *Vajrapāṇi*,
7. 'other' sound, *Vajra Sound Lady*,
8. the 'other' dharma constituent, *Vajra Dharma Constituent Lady*,
9. the supreme faculty,¹²⁸⁵ 'other' *Sumbha*,
10. the 'other' bhaga, *Uṣṇiṣa*,
11. 'other' excretion of urine, *Atinīlā*,
12. 'other' 'emission of semen, Wrathful Eye Lady.

These, *primordially* free from defilements, of one taste, and mixed into one, are said to be empty [in the sense of being aspects of] the absolute dhātu that is empty of other. Their emptiness is not nihilistic self-emptiness where everything is unreal, because they are [absolute phenomena] perceived by non-dual pristine wisdom, the self-awareness of yogins.

This dhātu is the absolute empty of other. It is the dhātu of uncompounded dharmitā. It is taught by¹²⁸⁶ the victorious ones to be unconquerable. This invincibility is hard to stabilize by others [who are not victorious ones.] This Word is symbolically taught by an inexpressible, merely depicted form of a hooked knife in the center of the south, north, east, and west [directions of the maṇḍala.] It symbolizes neither a vowel nor a consonant, but a Word. This is the first changeless, great empty topic, the dharmadhātu pristine wisdom.

After that is ye shes kyang, "pristine wisdom, also." Kyang, also, is a conjunction. Ye shes, pristine wisdom, should be understood to refer to the third changeless, great emptiness, or empty topic, as follows:

1. The 'other' feeling skandha, *Ratnasambhava*,
2. the 'other' fire element, *Pāṇḍara[vāsinī]*,
3. the 'other' eye, *Kṣitigarbha*,
4. 'other' taste, *Vajra Taste Lady*, ro rdo rje ma,
5. the 'other' hand, *Fogger Lady*, smugs ma,
6. 'other' going, *Stupifier Lady*, rmugs byed ma.

These, in **primordial** non-obscuration, equality, and mixture into one with **the absolute dhātu that is empty of other**, are pristine wisdom, as the third changeless great empty topic, **the pristine wisdom of equality**. The symbol of this word is two inexpressible drops, forming a visārga, to the south of the unconquerable center.

Thig le, drop, is for understanding the fourth changeless great empty topic, due to the preceding also,¹²⁸⁷ as follows:

1. The **'other'** skandha of conceptualized perception, Amitābha,
2. the water element, **'other'** Māmakī,
3. The **'other'** tongue, the Lord of the World, Avalokiteśvara.
4. **'other'** form, Vajra Form Lady, gzugs rdo rje ma,
5. The **'other'** legs, Arrogance Producer, khengs byed,
6. **'other'** receiving, Arrogance Producer Lady, khengs byed ma,

These, in **primordial** non-obscuration, equality, and mixture into one with **the absolute dhātu that is empty of other**, are the drop that is the fourth changeless great empty topic, **the pristine wisdom of discriminating awareness**. The symbol for this word is an inexpressible, single drop north of the unconquerable center.

Mchog dang rdo rje 'dzin pa, supreme and vajra holding, duplicated by repetition, becomes "as for Supreme and vajra holding, supreme and vajra holding." Due to the preceding "also" there are three **great** empty topics. The first supreme is the second changeless **great empty** topic, as follows:

1. The **'other'** skandha of formations, **Amoghasiddhi**,
2. the **'other'** wind element, **Tārā**,
3. the **'other'** nose, **Akāśagarbha**,
4. **'other'** touchables, **Vajra Touchables Lady**, reg bya rdo rje ma,
5. the **'other'** speech faculty, **Obstructing Spirit Enemy**, 'gegs dgra or 'gegs mthar byed,
6. **'other'** excreting excrement, Utterly powerful Lady, Ativiryā, shin tu stobs ma,

These are the **primordially liberated Tathāgata**, in primordial freedom from obscurations, equal taste, and mixture into one **as the absolute dhātu empty of other**. Therefore, they are supreme, mchog. This is the second topic of changeless, great emptiness, **the all-accomplishing pristine wisdom**. The symbol of this word is the mere, inexpressible drawing of a staff, east of the unconquerable center.

The second supreme expresses the fifth changeless great empty topic, as follows:

1. The **'other'** form skandha **is Vairocana**.
2. The **'other'** earth element **is Locanā**.

3. The 'other' body faculty is Nīvaraṇaviṣkambin.
4. 'other' odors are Vajra Smell Lady, Dri rdo rje ma.
5. The 'other' anus is Stiffener, rens byed.
6. 'other' speaking is Stiffener Lady, rens byed ma.

The sign of the word is the inexpressible figure of a skull west of the unconquerable center. The fifth so expressed, primordially unobscured, of one taste and mixed into one, is the fifth changeless, great empty topic, the mirror-like pristine wisdom.

With the details as described, these five that are mixed into one, are the five changeless, great empty topics.

Also:

1) The hooked knife body, 2) staff legs, 3) skull head, 4) crescent moon, 5) and above that an anusvāra, and 6) above that a bindu are said to be the support, VAM, Vajrasattva, and great bliss, expressed as a vajra.

And:

VAM should be realized by yogins through non-dual pristine wisdom to be the fifth, changeless, great empty topic, the nature of absolute bliss that is compassion without reference point. This is beyond the nature of atomic particles, like the nature of [an image in] mirror divination.

And:

The five great, empty topics have the nature of thirty-six absolute deities. Their nature itself is taught by the victorious ones as "vajra" nature. By holding that vajra nature, one is a vajra holder.

The six changeless, empty drops, are the support of VAM, E, the source of dharmas, and the forms of emptiness that is capable of manifesting all aspects. They are like this.

The first changeless, empty drop is these:

1. The 'other' consciousness skandha,
2. the 'other' space element,
3. the 'other' ear,
4. the 'other' [sense constituent of] phenomena,
5. the 'other' bhaga, and
6. the 'other' emission of semen.

These six, primordially free from obscuration, are absolute emptiness capable of manifesting all aspects. Above the unconquerable center, with the image of a hooked knife, the symbol of this Word is the consonant KA, exemplifying the nature of the KA class [of Sanskrit consonants.] It is inexpressible, because it has no vowel.

The second changeless, empty drop is these:

1. The 'other' formations skandha,
2. the 'other' wind element,
3. the 'other' nose,
4. the 'other' [sense constituent of] touchables,
5. 'other' speech, and
6. 'other' excretion of excrement.

These [six,] primordially free from obscuration, are absolute emptiness capable of manifesting all aspects. To the east of the eastern image of a staff, the symbol of this Word is the consonant CA, exemplifying the nature of the CA class [of Sanskrit consonants.] It is inexpressible, because it has no vowel.

The third changeless, empty drop is these:

1. The supreme¹²⁸⁸ feelings skandha,
2. the supreme fire element,
3. the supreme eyes,
4. the supreme [sense constituent of] tastes,
5. the supreme arms, and
6. supreme going.

These [six,] primordially free from obscuration, are absolute emptiness capable of manifesting all aspects. To the south of the southern image of two drops as a visārga, the symbol of this Word is the consonant ṬA, exemplifying the nature of the ṬA class [of Sanskrit consonants.] It is inexpressible, because it has no vowel.

The fourth changeless, empty drop is these:

1. The beyond conceptualized perception skandha,
2. the beyond water element,
3. the beyond tongue,
4. the beyond [sense constituent of] forms,
5. the beyond legs, and
6. beyond receiving.

These [six,] primordially free from obscuration, are absolute emptiness capable of manifesting all aspects. To the north of the northern image of one drop, the symbol of this Word is the consonant PA, exemplifying the nature of the PA class [of Sanskrit consonants.] It is inexpressible, because it has no vowel.

The fifth changeless, empty drop is these:

1. The absolute form skandha,
2. the absolute earth element,
3. the absolute body faculty,
4. the absolute [sense constituent of] smells,
5. the absolute asshole, and
6. absolute expression.

[These six,] primordially free from obscuration, are absolute

emptiness capable of manifesting all aspects. To the west of the western image of a skull, the symbol of this word is the consonant TA, exemplifying the nature of the TA class [of Sanskrit consonants.] It is inexpressible, because it has no vowel.

The sixth changeless, empty drop is these:

1. The pristine wisdom skandha of ultimate sugatagarbha,
2. the pristine wisdom element of ultimate sugatagarbha,
3. the mind faculty of ultimate sugatagarbha,
4. the sense constituent of sound of ultimate sugatagarbha,
5. the supreme faculty of ultimate sugatagarbha, and
6. excreting urine of ultimate sugatagarbha.

[These six,] primordially free from obscuration, are absolute emptiness capable of manifesting all aspects. Below the unconquerable center, the symbol of this word is the consonant SA, exemplifying the nature of the SA class [of Sanskrit consonants.] It is inexpressible, because it has no vowel.

In the center of six empty symbols, abides the VAM of great bliss, the suchness of mantra, the precious basket of buddhahood. The six changeless, empty drops, abide in the six directions as described, with a manner of non-dwelling. They depict, [as a triangle,] with three corners and three sides the source of dharmas, the vajra holder, E, emptiness with apprehension [of absolute phenomena,] having the [insubstantial] nature of an image in mirror divination. The consonant VAM is established from the vowels, and the vowel E is established from the consonants. In bliss-emptiness, both establish both,¹²⁸⁹ neutrally without bias.

And:

The five changeless, great empty topics are the collection of vowels of the absolute empty of other, called 'other' semen and moon.

The six changeless, empty drops are the group of consonants of the absolute empty of other, called 'other' menstrual blood and sun.

'Other' semen and moon are VAM pervading space, the vajra.
'Other' menstrual blood and sun are E, the lotus.

The unity of the vajra and lotus of the absolute empty of other is Vajrasattva, pervading space.

The indestructible vajra is supreme bliss, 'other' awareness, and 'other' moon and semen, the absolute vajrakāya.

Sattva, the three realms as one, is the form of prajñā [aware] of all aspects, 'other' knowables, 'other' menstrual blood and sun, taught as vajra.

The one taste of these is a blessing of the wisdom vajra and the ['other'] consciousness or mind vajra, as primordially without

obscuration and **primordially** mixed into one.

This is the suchness **of mantra**. It is the performer of benefit for beings, **pervading space**.

And:

Similarly, inner insight that is ‘other’ **than outer and inner relative consciousness, self-arising pristine wisdom, is** the goddess Prajñāpāramitā, naturally luminous Lady Mahāmudrā, the goddess possessing the form of innate joy, the occasion of perfection, whose concordant cause is dharmadhātu, the mother of Vajrasattva and Buddha.

She is not experienced by the interdependently arising senses. She is experienced by the supreme faculty, as the nature of supreme, changeless bliss. She transcends the phenomena of atomic particles, like a dream or [an image in] mirror divination.

Because this **absolute sugatagarbha** is the supreme, changeless nature, it is also called: **inseparable** coemergent **arising and never arising at all, the absolute** kāya of the victorious ones, **the great, empty topics, prajñā, dharmakāya, and the kāya of the essence of great bliss and skillful means**.

Here in regard to the changeless realities: form, feeling, conceptualized perception, formations, and consciousness; **[the five skandhas] of the truth of cessation**, are taught to be **primordially** free from obscurations as the five changeless, great empty topics.

The five elements earth, water, fire, wind, and space **of the truth of cessation, primordially** free from obscurations, are also taught to be these five changeless great empty topics. **Together, these are the natures of the ten knowledges** of buddhahood.

The changeless six drops are the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body sense faculty, and mind sense faculty **of the truth of cessation, pervading space, primordially** free from obscurations. All conceptual grasping of their individual objects has been **primordially** abandoned.

Likewise, the sense constituents of forms, sounds, odors, tastes, touchables, and phenomena are taught to be **primordially** free from obscurations as the changeless six drops. [Together,] these [two sets of six] are **the twelve true meanings**.

The empty drops are the skandhas, sense constituents, and sense sources of the truth of cessation **primordially** one in equal taste. When there is no more transference of these drops,¹²⁹⁰ they are called “the [twelve] supreme changeless realities.”

Supreme, changeless reality refers to “the syllable A, the truly,

completely enlightened buddhas arisen from A, the perfection of prajñā, dharmakāya, as well as the nature of skillful means inseparable from svābhavikakāya.

That is Vajrasattva, the neutral level¹²⁹¹ called “the kāya of coemergence,” the primordial inseparability of knower and known and cause and fruition. That is also the blessed one Kālacakra, the level of supreme changeless bliss.

Also:

Here the five changeless, great empty topics are vajras.

Also:

The “six changeless, empty drops” are the source of dharmas that is the support of these vajras or drops. However, having the characteristics of forms of buddhahood, they enter pervasively into all of the absolute, ‘other’ three realms and three times.

Dharmakāya, and the source of dharmas are said to be these six skandhas, and so forth that are the thirty-six constituents of the truth of cessation. The thirty-seventh that pervades them all is the aspect of changeless pristine wisdom. They are primordially without obscuration as aspects that pervade the space of the ground.

The four vajras are also these five changeless realities. Their emanations display the various miracles of emanation bodies.¹²⁹² The sounds of teaching the Dharma that pervade space are [communications of] complete enjoyment.¹²⁹³

8'. **Teaching That These Phenomena That are to Be Attained are Other Than, Superior To, and Beyond Those of the Outer and Inner Relative**

These skandhas, sense constituents, and so forth, primordially unobscured, with all the aspects of dharmatā, and inseparably of one taste with it, are ‘other’ than, superior to, and beyond the relative skandhas, sense constituents, and so forth. The five hundred thousand stanza *Kālacakra Root Tantra*¹²⁹⁴ says:

By cessation of cause and effect,¹²⁹⁵
There is no doubt about buddhahood.¹²⁹⁶
Dustless, dust-free, undefiled,
Abandoning defects and faultless,
Self ¹²⁹⁷ wakeful with total wakefulness,
All-aware, all-knowing holy one.
By cessation of cause and effect,¹²⁹⁸
‘Other’¹²⁹⁹ kāya of lords of conquerors,
‘Other’ body, speech, mind, and bliss,

The collections of skandhas¹³⁰⁰ are ‘other.’
Earth, and so forth, are ‘other.’

All the objects and faculties,
And likewise, the action faculties,
As well as their actions are 'other.'

Arms, legs, and so forth, completely,
With the eyes, face, and head,
And that having hearing¹³⁰¹ completely
In the world all abide pervasively.

These words say that the [absolute] 'other' skandhas, and so forth, are attained by cessation of the self-empty [relative] skandhas included within cause and effect. These [absolute] skandhas, and so forth, are 'other' than empty of themselves. Since they are, nevertheless, taught to be empty, an emptiness other than emptiness of self is well-established. That emptiness is the absolute's emptiness of what is other [than absolute.]

Arms, legs, and so forth, completely, and so forth, teaches the body or kāya of pristine wisdom that inseparably unites prajñā and skillful means that includes all its faculties of [sense and action,] so possessing them completely. That [prajñā and skillful means] abide pervasively is also taught. That union is dharmakāya, one with the great nirvāṇa, taught again and again in many sūtras to be pure, blissful, permanent, true selfhood. These same points are presented in the *Sūtra taught by Akṣayamati*:

Dharmadhātu is indeed the 'other' earth element, but dharmadhātu does not have the characteristic of hardness, and this has no fault of contradiction.

Dharmadhātu is indeed the 'other' water element, but dharmadhātu does not have the characteristic of wetness, and this has no fault of contradiction.

Dharmadhātu is indeed the 'other' fire element, but dharmadhātu does not have the characteristic of ripening [by warmth,] and this has no fault of contradiction.

Dharmadhātu is indeed the 'other' wind element, but dharmadhātu does not have the characteristic of motility, and this has no fault of contradiction.

Dharmadhātu is indeed the 'other' eye constituent, but dharmadhātu does not have the characteristic of causal looking, and this has no fault of contradiction.

Dharmadhātu is indeed the 'other' ear, nose, tongue, body, and mental [sense] constituents, but dharmadhātu does not have the respective characteristics of causal hearing, smelling, tasting, and conceptual knowing. It is not merely the characteristic of conceptually knowing forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables, and mental phenomena; and this has no fault of contradiction.

Dharmadhātu is indeed the 'other' [object] constituents of form, sound, smell, taste, touchables, and mental phenomena, but it is not

an object causally known by the consciousnesses of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body sense, and mental sense; and this has no fault of contradiction.

This sūtra extensively presents the application of these points to the individual aspects **that are only briefly taught here**, so you would do well to look it over. Similarly, the *Tantra of the Unsullied* says:

As the ‘other’ skandhas, and so forth,¹³⁰² have been seen,
This is called the maṇḍala of collections.

Also, the *Pristine Wisdom Chapter* in the *Kālacakra Tantra* says:

The sole Vajrasattva arises as Heruka, like a [black] cloud at the end of time, to ripen malevolent ones.

He arises as the conqueror, samaya,¹³⁰³ for the happiness of the deluded,

And as the lord of jewels,¹³⁰⁴ for those together with suffering,

and as the lotus holder¹³⁰⁵ for desire¹³⁰⁶ of those with desire,

And as the one with a sword in his lotus hand, Amoghasiddhi, to overcome obstructing spirits.

From hatred, he arises as Viśvamātā, a ḍākinī like fire at the end of time,

From stupidity, “Locanā,” and because of pride, as Māmakī, who is supreme compassion,

From desire, “Pāṇḍaravāsīnī,” from jealousy Tārā, a treasury of good qualities.

Having various forms, this two-fold one¹³⁰⁷ also arises as all ‘other’ objects and perceivers.

Commenting on this passage, the *Stainless Light* says:

1. The sole Vajrasattva taught above arises as a black heruka, like a cloud at the end of time. By phenomena being without [further] transition, ‘other’ consciousness **of the truth of cessation** is Heruka. Vajrasattva proliferates him to ripen malevolent ones. **At the same time, without contradiction, he is without [relative] proliferation.**

2. That [absolute] Vajrasattva also arises as ‘other’ forms **of the truth of cessation**, for the happiness of the deluded, [and as such,] that conqueror of samaya arises as Vairocana.

3. **That same absolute Vajrasattva** also arises as the lord of jewels, to bestow happiness on those together with suffering. As the transitionless phenomena of ‘other’ feeling **of the truth of cessation**, he arises as Ratnasambhava, ravishing away all suffering.

4. **That absolute Vajrasattva** also arises as the lotus holder for the sake of the desire of those with desire. He is the ‘other’ conceptualized perception of transitionless phenomena **of the truth of cessation**. [As such,] he is the bestower of transitionless bliss without emission, arising as Amitābha.

5. **That absolute Vajrasattva** also arises as the one with a sword in his lotus hand, to overcome obstructing spirits. By arising as Amoghasiddhi, ‘other’ formations that are transitionless phenomena **of the truth of cessation**, he makes obscurations of mind non-existent.

That passage is concerned with the five **primordially** pure buddhas. Then, speaking of the five sense object constituents [as their consorts,] it says there:

From the goddess Prajñāpāramitā, emptiness possessing [the supreme of] all aspects arises as the consort of variety, Viśvamātā,¹³⁰⁸

1. from hatred, the great hatred, **the ground** that **primordially** exhausts ordinary hatred, Vajradhātviśvarī arises as Vajra Ḍākinī.
2. Similarly, from the ground’s great stupidity [of omniscience] that **primordially** exhausts **ordinary** stupidity arises Locanā.
3. Supreme compassion, Māmakī, arises from the cause of the great pride [in all beings] that **primordially** exhausts **ordinary** pride.
4. From the great desire that **primordially** exhausts **ordinary** desire, arises Pāṇḍaravāsīnī, **pervading space**.
5. From the great jealousy that **primordially** exhausts **ordinary** jealousy, arises the treasury of all good qualities, Tārā.

These five are the ‘other’ elements of earth, water, fire, wind, and space. These characteristics of the elements **of the truth of cessation** are established from **primordially** unobscured form and transitionless bliss without emission. That is how they are established.

These two-fold topics, **great emptiness and great bliss**, are Kālacakra and Viśvamātā, prajñā and skillful means, mixed into one. Having various forms, arising as everything, they are the ‘other’ perceiver and object: ‘other’ objects like odors, speech, and arms, **of the truth of cessation, are the six male bodhisattvas**, ‘other’ perceivers like the ear **are the six female bodhisattvas**, speech, the hand, and so forth, **of the truth of cessation, ‘other’ action faculties, are the six male wrathful ones**, and the ‘other’ activities of the action faculties, **as the six female wrathful ones**.

Thus, **regarding all these deities of the truth of cessation:**

Arms, legs, and so forth, completely,
Completely, eyes, heads, and face,
And completely, [ears] having hearing
In the world, pervade everything.

This is speaking about [the above emanations of] Vajrasattva. Thus, it is said:

With all self- and other-knowledge,¹³⁰⁹
 Supreme¹³¹⁰ person helping all,
 Transcending worldly examples,
 Supreme lord of knower and known.¹³¹¹

Also, the *Stainless Light* says, commenting on the Kālacakra's *Chapter on Means of Practice*, says:

When relative phenomena have **primordially** ceased, there are the 'other' formations, and so forth: 1) the pure [absolute] formations of **the ground of the truth of cessation** are Amoghasiddhi, who is accomplished by exhausting obscured, [relative] formations **by the truth of the path**. If the path is absent, buddhahood is still present, but it is not attained [in realization.] Keep this in mind on all occasions. 2) feelings are "undefiled jewel-hand," Ratnasambhava... 3) Likewise, conceptualized perceptions of **the truth of cessation** are Amitābha. 4) The form skandha of **the truth of cessation** is "wheel-possessor," Vairocana. 5) The 'other' skandhas, as pure consciousness, are Akṣobhya.

These five 'other' skandhas are **primordially**, completely pure. This is due to the **primordial**, complete purity and non-obscurations of **the truth of cessation** of the "rabbit- imaged moon,"¹³¹² which is 'other' semen and "power," as well as 'other' human flesh, blood, urine, and excrement, [the five amṛitas].

Similarly, the [corresponding] six goddesses of **the truth of cessation** are: 1) Viśvamātā **pervading space**, 2) Vajradhātviśvarī, 3) Tārā, 4) Pāṇḍaravāsīnī, 5) Māmākī, and 6) Locanā.

"Through the 'other' elements," means that by the relative elements of 1) pristine wisdom, 2) space, 3) wind, 4) fire, 5) water, and 6) earth **primordially** ceasing; the corresponding 'other' six elements of the [absolute] truth of cessation are **[revealed in experience as] primordially** completely pure.

"By objects and perceivers," means that the six objects of **the truth of cessation**, form, and so forth, and the six perceivers of **the truth of cessation**, the eyes, and so forth, are completely pure as 'other' forms, and so forth, and the 'other' eyes, and so forth.

The six **[female bodhisattvas] of the truth of cessation** are Vajra form Lady, or Rūpavajrī, and so forth. Together with [their consorts] Kṣitigarbha, and so forth, they are the [female and male] bodhisattvas of **the truth of cessation**. The **[male] bodhisattvas are depicted** together with these mudrā consorts.

Regarding the five wrathful ones of **the truth of cessation**, "by the powers" refers to the five powers of faith, exertion, mindfulness, meditative absorption, and prajñā of **the truth of cessation**. When [relative] obscurations of absence of faith, exertion, mindfulness, meditative absorption, and prajñā are **primordially** exhausted, the

corresponding powers of faith, and so forth, **of the truth of cessation [are revealed.]** When **the non-according side of** these powers **of the truth of cessation** are **primordially** purified, they are the **primordially** pure wrathful kings **of the truth of cessation**. These are: 1) Sumbha, 2) Uṣṇiṣa, 3) Obstructing Spirit Terminator, Vighnāntaka, ‘geg mthar byed, 4) Prajñā Terminator,¹³¹³ Prajñāntaka, shes rab mthar byed, and 5) Lord of Death Terminator, Yamāntaka, shi bdag mthar byed. **Except for Uṣṇiṣa, these are deities of the mind maṇḍala.**

“Certainly, again the others,” refers to 1) Sumbharāja,¹³¹⁴ 2) Nīlandaṇḍa,¹³¹⁵ 3) Ṭakki,¹³¹⁶ 4) Acala,¹³¹⁷ and 5) Mahābala.¹³¹⁸ These are the five action faculties, 1) the bhaga, 2) speech, 3) arms, 4) legs, and 5) anus **of the truth of cessation**. These are pure by the **primordial** complete purity of the actions of the action faculties **of the truth of cessation**, Raudārakṣī,¹³¹⁹ and so forth. **Together with Uṣṇiṣa, they are the male and female wrathful ones of the body maṇḍala.**

Then, in the speech maṇḍala, Cāmuṇḍā, and so forth, are the eight [three-hour] sessions of a day **of the truth of cessation**. They abide on the petals of an eight-petalled lotus. Bhīmā,¹³²⁰ and so forth, **the sixty yoginīs of the truth of cessation**, are the sixty chutsö.¹³²¹ **[five for each of] the twelve** solar temporal conjunctions [of a day]. The remaining four **[of the sixty-four petals of the navel cakra]** are the **primordially** pure [four] empty petals.¹³²² By **primordial** exhaustion of obscurations of the **navel** emanation cakra, ‘other’ Carcikā, and so forth, **the eight principal ones**, with ‘other’ Bhīmā, and so forth, **the fifty-four**¹³²³ **deities of their retinue**, occur.

“Jealous gods, and so forth,” **of the body maṇḍala, [means that]** the twelve month-deities are purified by exhausting the obstructions of the twelve months. These deities **of the truth of cessation** are: 1) Nairṛtya, *bden bral*, 2) Vayu, *rlung lha*, 3) Agni, *me lha*, 4) Ṣaṇmukha, *gdong drug pa*, 5) Samudra, *rgya mtsho*, 6) Gaṇeṇra, *tshogs kyi dbang po*, 7) Śakra, *brgya byin*, 8) Bhramā, *tshangs pa*, 9) Rudra, *drag po*, 10) Yakṣa, *gnod sbyin*, 11) Viṣṇu, *khyab ‘jug*, and 12) Yama, *gshin rje*.

The corresponding months **of the truth of cessation** are:¹³²⁴ 1) Chaitra, *nag pa*, 2) Vaiśāka, *sa ga*, 3) Jyēṣṭha, *snron*, 4) Āṣāḍha, *chu stod*, 5) Śrāvaṇa, *gro bzhin*, 6) Bhādra, *khnums stod*, 7) Āśvina, *tha skar*, 8) Kārtika, *smin drug*, 9) Mārgaśīrṣa, *mgo*, 10) Pauṣa, *rgyal*, 11) Māgha, *mchu*, and 12) Phālguna, *dbo*.

These twelve deities abide on lotus petals. There are 348 offering goddesses within the mind maṇḍala. With the further twelve offering goddesses, Lāsyā, and so forth, they are the 360 goddesses of the ‘other’ days [of the year].¹³²⁵ **360**, is also the number of breaths in **one chutsö**. By the obscurations of the 360 days being **primordially** exhausted, the **principal twelve** pure, ‘other’ deities of

the truth of cessation, with the ‘other’ petal goddesses, *Lāsyā*, and so forth, make 360 [days and goddesses] that are *primordially* purified.¹³²⁶

Secretly, in the truth of cessation, “lords of humans,” [here a code for] sixteen, “times two” ‘other’ *chutsō*, is 32. *Nāga*, [a code for] eight, and fierce woman, [also a code for] eight, are *primordially* pure. That is, there are $8+8 = 16 \times 2 = 32$ divisions of *prajñā* and skillful means that are pure.

Likewise, “*Ichhā*,”¹³²⁷ and so forth,” refers to the above thirty-six goddesses of particular desires, and the thirty-six outside of, or not having, those desires, [all depicted iconographically] on the ledges of the speech and body *maṇḍalas*. By the power of their natures and qualities, the body actions of the truth of cessation are completely pure. By obscurations of body actions being *primordially* exhausted, ‘other’ *Ichhā*, and so forth, the rest of the desire ladies and outside of desire ladies, [or ladies of non-desire,] of the truth of cessation, are purified.

With the number of hairs on the head [of the heruka] of the truth of cessation, there are all the *siddhas* of the truth of cessation. Corresponding to the thirty-five million *primordially* unobstructed body hairs of the truth of cessation, in the charnel grounds of the truth of cessation, the host of spirits [that abide there] are *primordially*, completely purified as ‘other’ *siddhas* and spirits.¹³²⁸ Later, these deities are purified by the divisions of each kind [of *siddha* and spirit.]

By the twenty-four principles¹³²⁹ being *primordially* without obscuration, the [twenty-four] *vajra* weapons held by the principal deity *Kālacakra*, the three-pointed sword, and so forth, are *primordially* pure. That is because they are the ground of naturelessness of the twenty-four [relative] aspects.

In “By the power of nature and qualities,” nature refers to *relative* earth, and so forth, the group of elements. The qualities of those are those of the *relative* six sense objects. By the power of obscurations of those [phenomena] being *primordially* exhausted, the ‘other’ *absolute* constituents, odor, and so forth, are [revealed as] *primordially* pure deities of the truth of cessation called the “six external *mudrās*.” These are the adornments of a wheel, ear rings, a necklace, bracelets and anklets, a sash, and charnel ash. They symbolize the [six] perfections.

“*Vajras*” refers to the four *vajras* of body, speech, mind, and pristine wisdom of the truth of cessation. These are *primordial* purities having the characteristics of waking, dream, deep sleep and the fourth occasion. Because they are *primordially* free from obscurations, these four inner *mudrā* seals are *primordially* pure.

“At the heart of the *vajra* holder” means that, [iconographically,]

these purely and truly abide on a moon disk at the heart of the principal deity of the maṇḍala. That “glorious one having a vajra” of the truth of cessation is Kālacakra, supreme, changeless innate joy, of the four joys, absolute great bliss.

His consort of variety of the truth of cessation, Viśvamātā, is pristine wisdom of emptiness capable of manifesting all aspects and timelessly seeing [all of] the three times. This occurs due to primordially exhausting outflows of the conceptually scrutinized¹³³⁰ bliss of emission, so that it is completely pure.

“Abiding in three-fold existence” means that everywhere at all times, all [phenomena of] the skandhas, and so forth, of the truth of cessation, are primordially completely pure. That is because they are [aspects of] the ground that have primordially exhausted all obscurations. Completely knowing existence in that way as the self-awareness of ‘other’ pristine wisdom, is called “nirvāṇa.”¹³³¹ Such is the ascertainment of the Blessed One.

These words and very many other passages say that the [truly existing] absolute skandhas, sense constituents, and so forth that are [empty of and] other than the self-empty skandhas, sense constituents, and so forth, [of the relative] exist [absolutely] as pristine wisdom deities. Therefore, it is established that their fundamental nature is a kind of emptiness other than self-emptiness.

By the same token, “by the cessation of [the relative] skandhas, sense constituents, and so forth that are self-empty, incidental defilements; the skandhas, sense constituents, and so forth, of sugatagarbha that abide as pristine wisdom deities are attained,” teaches by entailment that sugatagarbha itself is not exhausted by exhausting the defilements of which it is to be purified.”

The noble one Vajragarbha says:

Relative consciousness, as well as the sense faculties of the eyes, and so forth, are bound by the bondage of relative real things. Liberation that completely knows these [as they are consists of] cessation of all the objects and faculties of the truths of suffering and origin. This cessation occurs through the truth of the path. This [truth of] cessation is [liberation that is] called “complete knowledge.” Mere [conceptual] knowledge of the self-emptiness of grasper and grasped cannot do the job of this kind of knowledge.

“Being liberated through the real things themselves” is seeing past objects of the truth of cessation that are also future and present objects of the truth of cessation. At this time, the three times are gathered into one without contradiction¹³³² by the divine eye, and so forth, [the eyes of prañña,¹³³³ dharma,¹³³⁴ and pristine wisdom.]¹³³⁵ By that being accomplished, there is liberation from the bondage of the six sense-consciousnesses of the relative.

The consciousnesses within the ground of liberation are those of the absolute truth of cessation. Therefore, they are ‘other’ than these relative [consciousnesses]. Also, they are completely pure. That is the Word spoken by the Blessed One. The forms, and so forth, the feelings and other skandhas of the truth of cessation, are all said to be ‘other.’ Therefore:¹³³⁶

Arms, legs, and so forth, completely,
And the eyes, face, and head,
And that having hearing completely
In the world all abide pervasively.¹³³⁷

These words are saying, ‘if the objects and sense powers of the truths or suffering and origin do not cease through the truth of the path, there is bondage; but if they do cease, there is liberation, [the truth of cessation.]’

‘Other’ consciousness, and so forth, are taught to be the pervasive abiding of the kāyas of pristine wisdom, possessing all their faculties. This kind of profound emptiness is other than self-emptiness. The glorious *Stainless Light* says:

In the middle of these, earth, and so forth, “the vajra possessor” is neither a static nature nor a transformation into a natureless pervader. This [vajra possessor possesses] the phenomena of mind, when they are liberated from habitual propensities of saṃsāra.

Therefore, “mind existing as the naturally luminous mind that is the fundamental nature of things is not relative mind.” That ‘other’ mind of natural great nirvāṇa, primordially free from the mind of saṃsāra, [truly] existing as the fundamental nature of things, is called “the vajra possessor” by the Blessed One.

Also, it says there:

The vajra possessor of space pervading space is completely free from [the dualistic] objects of the truths of suffering and origin. However, it has the [non-dual] objects of the truth of cessation. These are primordially free from the eight [relative] qualities of the sun and moon.¹³³⁸ They abide as the ground without such natures.

The extensive teaching of this should be understood from a guru, through the instructions of [the teachers] of the tenth [bodhisattva] level. The same text says:

The complete, primordial purity of the four vajras of the mind of the truth of cessation has the characteristics of the four kāyas. Meditation with the nature of joining the bhaga and male organ¹³³⁹ remains entirely within the level of defilements of passion that are hard to reverse. It does not have this authentic mind of the fourth occasion.¹³⁴⁰

Primordially without that defiled approach, the eternal mind of the fourth occasion of the truth of cessation, is the [absolute] ground,

svābhavikakāya. In the tantras, this is called “omniscience.”

This real mind is primordially free from the attributes of the mind of ordinary deep sleep that is overwhelmed by darkness.¹³⁴¹ It is the deep sleep of the truth of cessation, dharmakāya. This [kind of mind] is taught in the tantras by the name “pristine wisdom kāya.”

The mind of dreams of the truth of cessation, in the ground that is primordially free from the mind of dreams of existence and non-existence produced by “the life” – that is, the life-wind or prāṇa – is sambhogakāya. In the tantras that is called “the eye of the day-producing sun.”

The mind of the waking state **of the truth of cessation or the ground** that is **primordially** without the mind characterized by many discursive thoughts of conceptualized perception of the ordinary waking state is nirmāṇakāya. **In the tantras that is called** “the eye of blossoming lotus petals.”

These words also teach the emptiness of self of the relative and emptiness of other of the absolute. How are those [two kinds of emptiness] taught there?

1. The attributes of the mind of the fourth occasion of the truths of suffering and origin are incidental defilements that are empty of themselves.
2. The ground without those, absolute sugatagarbha, is the mind of changeless bliss. **That is the fourth occasion of the truth of cessation**, svābhavikakāya. Never non-existent, that [always exists as] pure, blissful, eternal, ultimate selfhood. This is the great emptiness that is not empty of itself. It is established in this text as the absolute empty of other.

The attributes of the minds of deep sleep, dream, and waking of the truths of suffering and origin are empty of themselves. The ground without those is the [non-empty] mind of the body, speech, and mind of absolute sugatagarbha. **The [‘other’] deep sleep, dream, and waking of the truth of cessation**, are, **respectively**, dharmakāya, sambhogakāya, and nirmāṇakāya. Included within the absolute, these absolute kāyas are also empty of other.

“Mind without the attributes of mind” being taught four times is totally in accord with the earlier teaching, “When something is empty of something [the first] is empty of [the second.] What remains there, that always exists.” The way of knowing what exists and does not exist in the fundamental way things are is like that.

These points teach that the defilements to be purified and the ground to be purified of them are [irreconcilably] different. They cannot be different attributes [of a single entity,] because they have a great many, [irreconcilable] differences of being: incidental fabrications versus the

fundamental nature, relative versus absolute, dharmas versus dharmatā, extremes versus the middle, arisen from others versus self-arising, imaginary or dependent versus perfectly established, consciousness versus wisdom, worldly versus world-transcending, compounded versus uncompounded, suffering versus bliss, contaminated versus uncontaminated, incomplete versus complete qualities of dharmakāya, destructible versus indestructible.

The *Mother*, and so forth, teach naturally luminous mind again and again, “Mind that is existent **as the fundamental nature**, is **absolute** mind without **relative** mind.” That should be understood as teaching the absolute empty of other.

Absolute mind exists as the fundamental way things are. In that true nature, relative mind does not exist at all. Therefore, “existent mind” is the [solitary,] absolute, naturally luminous mind of enlightenment. The *Guhyasamāja* says:

The great¹³⁴² mind of all sentient beings¹³⁴³
Is undefiled and naturally pure.

That teaches the mind of the truth of cessation. That kind of mind is “without **relative** mind,” because it is naturally pure of [dualistic, identifying] mind, the mental, and consciousness, [as taught above.] The intention is the [non-empty] ground of emptiness of self-empty, relative mind. That ground abides eternally as innate, absolute mind that is empty of other.

The mind vajra should also be understood like that, **as absolute ground** without **relative** mind. The [absolute] ground without relative mind is also called “the mind vajra” or “vajra mind.” This absolute mind [is called “vajra,” because it] is indestructible, and it can never be cut off.

Similarly, the many [seemingly paradoxical] teachings that are [actually] without faults of contradiction of “body without body,” “existence without existence,” “excellent, formless form,” “having all aspects and having none,” and so forth teach again and again that same world-transcending, profound, absolute ground that is empty of other. The *Revelation of the Intention Tantra* says, [regarding the twelve links of interdependent origination and the seven kinds of pride that are aspects of that absolute ground:]¹³⁴⁴

Ignorance and formations,
Consciousness, name and form,
The six sense sources, and contact,
Feeling, and subsequent craving,
Clinging, existence, and birth,
With aging and death are consorts.

Pride and pride of greatness,
Of thinking I, and conceit,

And overbearing pride,
 Pride in self-abasement,
 As well as erroneous pride,
 Have the highest ultimate¹³⁴⁵ vajra.¹³⁴⁶

The *Glorious*¹³⁴⁷ *Union of All the Buddhas* says:

In brief, the five-fold skandhas¹³⁴⁸
 Are famed as the five-fold buddhas.¹³⁴⁹
 The vajra sources of sense¹³⁵⁰
 Are the bodhisattva maṇḍala.¹³⁵¹

And:

Locanā is the earth element.¹³⁵²
 Water abides as Māmakī.
 Pāṇḍara^{vāsinī} and Tārā
 Are well-known as fire and wind.
 The commitment of vajra samaya
 to the dhātu of [limitless] space
 is the vajra holder himself.

Those words extensively teach the [essential] ground that is primordially empty of the fabricated, incidental skandhas, sense constituents, and so forth. [However, that ground is] not [empty of] the naturally, completely pure skandhas, sense constituents, and so forth, of the fundamental natural state, dharmatā. They are ‘other,’ supreme, beyond, and absolute. So, absolute truth is other than, supreme, and beyond inferior, relative truth.

The especially exalted tantras say:

As is the outer, so is the inner.
 As is the inner, so is the ‘other.’

The outer and inner husk of a grain and the essential kernel abide with a similar external aspect, but they do not have the same essence. Likewise, the outer vessel of the world, with its inner contents, sentient beings, and sugatagarbha, suchness that is other ^{than these two}, do not have the same essence,¹³⁵³ but they abide with a similar aspect. This description of their manner has the same meaning as what is said in other texts of the greater Middle Way:

This, as it appears, is conventional.
 The opposite is the ‘other.’

This teaches ^{the two truths of Madhyamaka}, but also says that they abide with a single meaning. “This, as it appears,” refers to the outer and inner appearances of consciousness. What is ‘other’ than these is absolute dharmatā that is other than these relative phenomena, or beyond, supreme over, and truer than they are. That absolute truth is the [exclusive]

opposite of the relative truth of the two truths. This teaching that absolute truth is other than relative truth clears away what some maintain, that ‘the two truths are inseparable.’¹³⁵⁴

Also, some who are very mistaken assert that “these things that appear to consciousness are relative, but when it is maintained that they are empty of themselves, they are¹³⁵⁵ absolute truth.” This is mistaken because 1) what is empty of itself cannot be absolute truth, and 2) absolute truth cannot be empty of itself.

This is so, because many pure scriptural sources we have explained and will explain present these points. They are also knowable by experience and reasoning.

Maintaining ‘all appearance is relative, and all emptiness is absolute’ is equally nonsense, because both the relative and the absolute have both appearance and emptiness. The above assertion is refuted by its absurd consequences that 1) Even appearances of dharmatā are relative and 2) even the emptiness of relative phenomena is absolute.¹³⁵⁶

Other sources for these conclusions are taught in other instructions.

9'. **Clearing Away Many Extreme Views Claiming that These Absolute Realities Must be Equivalent to Self-Emptiness**

Objection: If self-emptiness and dharmadhātu are not synonyms, how do you explain this passage from the *Sūtra Teaching the Inseparable Nature of Dharmadhātu*, within the *Jewel Heap Sūtra*?

Venerable Śāradvatiputra, even the ‘other’ omnipresent afflictive emotions are of the nature of dharmadhātu. Therefore, discriminating, self-aware pristine wisdom that completely knows these ‘other,’ omnipresent afflictive emotions to be of the nature of dharmadhātu is called “complete purity.”

Answer: As previously taught, this teaching has the intention of the [non-empty] suchness of the afflictive emotions or the afflictive emotions of suchness. That intention is as previously taught. The following passage from the *Sūtra taught by Akṣayamati* is also taught with the intention of the suchness of the afflictive emotions:

“Because these afflictive emotions of **the truth of cessation** are realized **by discriminating self-awareness pristine wisdom**, there is enlightenment **that is the truth of cessation**. That is so because the essence of the afflictive emotions **of the truth of cessation** is also the essence of enlightenment of the truth of cessation,” Such things can be made into objects of mindfulness. However, there is nothing at all [in the absolute truth of cessation] that can be made into a [dualistic, conceptual] object, totally made into [such an] object, or completely made into such an object. Even so, the dharmatā of these is known to exist **as the fundamental nature**. Therefore, it is

said, “dharmadhātu exists **as the fundamental nature.**”

This is taught intending the [absolute] suchness of the afflictive emotions. The purpose of teaching this is as previously explained. In such a way, the *Sūtra of the Meeting of Father and Son* says:

Blessed One, the pure and true ultimate imbues all phenomena. No phenomenon **within the fundamental, natural state** is not a phenomenon of the pure and true ultimate. Blessed One, “enlightenment” of the absolute truth of cessation is the pure and true ultimate. What is that enlightenment **of the absolute truth of cessation?** Blessed One, **dharmatā, the ground** of the naturelessness of all **relative** phenomena should be known to be **that** enlightenment.

Even down to the [five evil deeds of] immediate retribution, all [relative] phenomena have that [same] nature **of enlightenment.** Why so? Blessed One, enlightenment **of the absolute truth of cessation** is **the ground of their** naturelessness. The [five evil deeds of] immediate retribution **of the absolute truth of cessation** also have that nature **of enlightenment.** Why so? Blessed One, all phenomena of the truth of cessation, with no remainder of the [relative] skandhas, are aspects of the dhātu of nirvāṇa. The [five evil deeds of] immediate retribution of **the absolute truth of cessation** also have that nature.

That is taught with the intention that the suchness of the [five evil deeds of] immediate retribution, and so forth, is the pure and true, ultimate way all phenomena are. [In that sense,] all phenomena are phenomena of the pure and true ultimate.¹³⁵⁷ The purpose is as before. Similarly, the *Sūtra Teaching Relative and Absolute Truth* says:

Devaputra asked, “Mañjuśrī, what is correct application?

Mañjuśrī replied, “Devaputra, [correct application] is [application to] whatever is equivalent to the absolute, suchness, dharmadhātu, and total non-arising.

In the absolute, even the five [evil deeds] of immediate retribution are equivalent to these.

In the absolute, everything is equivalent with suchness, dharmadhātu, and total non-arising.

In the absolute, even conceptual views are equivalent to these.

In the absolute, everything is equivalent with suchness, dharmadhātu, and total non-arising.

In the absolute, even phenomena of ordinary beings are equivalent to these.

In the absolute, all relative phenomena are equal in being non-existent.”

And:

Mañjuśrī said, “In the absolute, all phenomena are equal in total non-arising.

In the absolute all phenomena are equal in being completely unborn.

In the absolute, all phenomena are equal in being utterly unreal things. Therefore, Devaputra, in the absolute, all phenomena are equal **in that equality**.

Why Devaputra? Because there is total non-arising in the absolute, there is no way to differentiate phenomena **that arise in the absolute and those that do not arise in the absolute**.

Devaputra, it is like this, for example: The space in a clay vessel and the space in a jewel vessel are **the same** space. In the absolute, there is no way to differentiate those spaces at all.

Devaputra, similarly, **though** the afflictive emotions **are not non-existent** in the absolute, they are totally unborn **from causes and conditions**. What is totally unborn in the absolute is completely pure. In the absolute, saṃsāra is totally unborn. **It is no different from the horns of a rabbit**. In the absolute, [all phenomena] up to great nirvāṇa are totally unborn, **whether their essences exist or not**. In the absolute, there is no way to differentiate them at all. Why? In the absolute, all phenomena are totally unborn, **whether their essences exist or not**.

That is taught with the intention of the suchness of [both] saṃsāra – phenomena of ordinary beings, like the afflictive emotions – and nirvāṇa – [the phenomena of] complete purity [of buddhahood]. Here too, the purpose is as discussed above.

Objection: Texts like the Pristine Wisdom of the Moment of Death teach that when **absolute** mind is realized, the realizer is pristine wisdom. Is not the intention of these teachings that mind is empty of mind?

Answer: Well, [certainly] that is not true just by your saying it. If it were, [merely intellectual] realizations that mind is empty of mind would be pristine wisdom, even while the continuity of the karmic winds has not been stopped [by yoga]. Maintaining that would contradict the intention of the profound, ultimate tantras, the bodhisattvas of the tenth level who are lords of the three families, and so forth. That is so, because the intention of the *Pristine Wisdom of the Moment of Death*, is absolute mind.

Objection: Āryadeva’s *Lamp that is a Compendium for Practice* says:

All tathāgatas, see with the nature of the great compassion that all sentient beings have fallen into a whirlpool of suffering, without any refuge and protector.

[To remedy that,] **first**, according to the manner of the relative, they **coarsely** purify the afflictive emotions by completely knowing **[intellectually] that** the essence of the afflictive emotions **is self-**

emptiness.

Then, that [intellectual] knowledge of relative truth that the afflictive emotions are empty of themselves is itself completely purified by [non-conceptual] pristine wisdom that directly sees absolute truth.

Then these [suffering] beings are purely and truly established in meditative absorption having as its essence of the way of the pure and true....

Doesn't that teach that the afflictive emotions are purified by knowing that their essence is empty of itself?

Answer: The intention there is first temporarily taking the edge off [saṃsāric suffering,] by suppressing coarse afflictive emotions through relative, [conceptual] knowledge that the afflictive emotions are empty of themselves.

Ultimately, that relative, [conceptual] knowledge itself must be purified by the [non-conceptual] pristine wisdom of meditative absorption that manifests the absolute in experience – as this very text teaches. Similarly, the *Hevajra* says:

There is liberation through things themselves,¹³⁵⁸
But also, we are bound by the bondage of things.¹³⁵⁹
Through completely knowing these,¹³⁶⁰ there is liberation.

The meaning of these words and similar passages is not, **as some would have it**, that we are liberated just by knowing [intellectually] that all things are empty of themselves. We are liberated, when we are liberated [by yogic practice] from movements of wind and mind. Then, delusive, [dualistic] appearances subside, and the self-appearances of pristine wisdom manifest. You should know this in detail from the profound bodhisattva commentaries, like the one by the noble one Vajragarbha, along with the guru's practice instructions. The intention of other teachings of liberation through recognizing [how things are is similar.]

The principal fetter [of realization] is the continuity of [karmic] winds that are the mount of grasping [relative] selfhood. If these winds are stopped, there is release from bondage. Then, having attained the ground of emptiness, the absolute empty of other with [all] its limitless qualities, we can perform benefits for all sentient beings. Dharmatā, absolute truth, is the ground of all phenomena that abide in self-emptiness. [Dharmatā] is the ultimate, definitive meaning of all the profound scriptures, those that teach clearly and directly, as well as those speak indirectly, [with various degrees of hidden intention.] The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* says:

Mahāmati, my permanent, inconceivable absolute **of the truth of cessation, pervading space**, has the characteristic of being the **'other'** cause of the absolute. Because it has the characteristic of the

discriminating self-awareness of a noble one, it has the characteristic **that what it knows really exists as perfectly established dharmatā, primordially** free from 1) the existence of the **imagined and dependent** and 2) its own non-existence.

Dharmatā is the cause¹³⁶¹ of the pristine wisdom of the absolute **that apprehends the emptiness of [its relative] reflections**. It exists as [its own] cause. Without [relative] existence and non-existence, it is an unproduced phenomenon, like the examples of [primordial] space, [primordial] nirvāṇa, and [primordial] cessation. Therefore, it is permanent.

However, Mahāmāti, this absolute **sugatagarbha** does not accord with Indian extremists' [conceptually limited] assertions about the permanent and inconceivable.

Mahāmāti, this permanent and inconceivable dhātu is the suchness apprehended by the tathāgatas' exalted, discriminating self-awareness pristine wisdom....

So it is explained there and in further scriptures whose meaning has been explained or will be explained [in this text]. Moreover, the *Āṅgulimāla Sūtra* says:

Mañjuśrī, the way that the suchness of self is wrongly viewed as being "like this, like this" is as follows: Worldly ones do not know about [the Buddha's] indirect speech **whose intention is the ground of selflessness** regarding liberation, [the true] self, and the world-transcending. Therefore, they conceptualize, "Selflessness is the Word of the Buddha," like those who dwell in extremes.

These worldly ones who contrive their tormented logical inferences go into the power of the Dharma of stupidity **by their conceptualized view of selfhood**. They do not know how to explain [the Buddha's] indirect speech about the world-transcending. **That [indirect speech] teaches selflessness, with the intention of [the true self that is] the ground of selflessness [of the relative. Because they do not know that,] their knowledge has degenerated.**

On the other hand, the vehicle of the **absolute** Tathāgata is taught as the path of the Middle Way that abandons the two partialities **of eternalism and nihilism**. That is accomplished through teaching the suchness of phenomena, **absolute** selfhood that includes the [absolute] Tathāgata, and the [absolute] Saṅgha. "The path of the Middle Way" is synonymous with the [intention of the] Great Vehicle."

- 10'. **Teaching the Immense Benefits of Faith, and So Forth, in That Object of Attainment**

The ultimate Great Vehicle is the vehicle of dharmatā, the vehicle of sugatagarbha, and the absolute ground of emptiness of other. When faith and confidence are aroused in dharmatā, many obscurations are purified. As the *Sūtra of the Crushing and Joining Hell* says:

Whatever total heroes arouse total faith in the Great Vehicle will not go to **hell, the worst of the** lower realms, for a thousand eons. They will not be born in the birth place of animals for five hundred eons, nor likewise, in the realm of hungry ghosts. They will be born for twenty-five thousand eons in the worlds of the gods and the world of Bhramā.¹³⁶²

Āryadeva's *Four Hundred Stanzas on the Middle Way* says:

Even those of little merit should avoid
So much as doubts about this teaching of the Dharma.¹³⁶³
Just by having generated doubts about it,
Saṃsāra, riven, will be torn to shreds and tatters.¹³⁶⁴

This is also extensively taught in other texts, many of which I have discussed above. It is also taught that, in order to practice these teachings [oneself], by reading them, apprehending [their meaning], holding them in memory, and so forth; and in order to teach them to others, while having confidence in them and not deprecating them; it is necessary to receive the arousal of bodhicitta from many buddhas.¹³⁶⁵ The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

Child of noble family, whatever sentient beings receive arousing bodhicitta from buddhas as many as the grains of sand of the Joy-producing River,¹³⁶⁶ during this bad time, will retain this sūtra and hold it in mind, not deprecating it.

Child of noble family, whatever sentient beings receive arousing bodhicitta from buddhas as many as the grains of sand of one Ganges river, during this bad time, will not deprecate this Dharma **that clearly teaches absolute sugatagarbha, the ground of emptiness**. They will have devotion for this sūtra, but they will not be able to reveal and teach it to others.

Child of noble family, whatever sentient beings receive arousing bodhicitta from buddhas as many as the grains of sand of two Ganges rivers, during this bad time, will not deprecate this Dharma **that clearly teaches absolute sugatagarbha, the ground of emptiness**. They will have devotion for this sūtra, and they will read it, apprehend it, hold it in mind, and recite it; but they will not be able to reveal and teach it to others extensively.

Child of noble family, whatever sentient beings receive arousing bodhicitta from buddhas as many as the grains of sand of three Ganges rivers, during this bad time, will not deprecate this Dharma **that clearly teaches absolute sugatagarbha, the ground of emptiness**. They will have devotion for this sūtra, and they will read

it, apprehend it, hold it in mind, and recite it. They will write in down in books; but though they teach it to others, they themselves will not know the profound meaning of this sūtra.

Child of noble family, whatever sentient beings receive arousing bodhicitta from buddhas as many as the grains of sand of four Ganges rivers, during this bad time, will not deprecate this Dharma that clearly teaches absolute sugatagarbha, the ground of emptiness. They will have devotion for this sūtra, read it, apprehend it, hold it in mind, and recite it. They will write in down in books. They will be able to teach one sixteenth part of its meaning to others; but though they teach and explain it, they themselves will not know this sūtra completely.

Child of noble family, whatever sentient beings receive arousing bodhicitta from buddhas as many as the grains of sand of five Ganges rivers, during this bad time, will not deprecate this Dharma that clearly teaches absolute sugatagarbha, the ground of emptiness. They will have devotion for this sūtra, and they will read it, apprehend it, hold it in mind, and recite it, and write in down in books. They will be able to teach eight sixteenth parts of its meaning to others.

Child of noble family, whatever sentient beings receive arousing bodhicitta from buddhas as many as the grains of sand of six Ganges rivers, during this bad time, will not deprecate this Dharma that clearly teaches absolute sugatagarbha, the ground of emptiness. They will have devotion for this sūtra, and they will read it, apprehend it, hold it in mind, and recite it, and write in down in books. They will be able to teach twelve sixteenth parts of its meaning to others.

Child of noble family, whatever sentient beings receive arousing bodhicitta from buddhas as many as the grains of sand of seven Ganges rivers, during this bad time, will not deprecate this Dharma that clearly teaches absolute sugatagarbha, the ground of emptiness. They will have devotion for this sūtra, and they will read it, apprehend it, hold it in mind, and recite it, and write it down in books for others. They will be able to teach fourteen sixteenth parts of its meaning to others.

Child of noble family, whatever sentient beings receive arousing bodhicitta from buddhas as many as the grains of sand of eight Ganges rivers, during this bad time, will not deprecate this Dharma that clearly teaches absolute sugatagarbha, the ground of emptiness. They will have devotion for this sūtra, and they will read it, apprehend it, hold it in mind, and recite it, and they will urge others to write in down in books. Listening to it and grasping it themselves, they will also urge others to listen too, grasp, read, recite, and apprehend it. Because of their love and compassion for the world, they will guard intensely and pay reverence to this sūtra

that clearly teaches absolute sugatagarbha, the ground of emptiness. They will also urge others to revere, respect, offer homage to, read, and recite it.

Their complete apprehension of the [Buddha's] profound meaning is like this: They extensively explain that the absolute Tathāgata has the qualities of permanent abiding, changelessness, and ultimate bliss, and that his buddha nature exists in [all] sentient beings. They are very competent in explaining the treasure of the Tathāgata's Dharma. Having worshipped these buddhas and this unsurpassable pure and true Dharma, they will hold this Dharma in mind, grasp it, protect it, and realize what it presents. Whatever individuals arouse a wish directed at unsurpassable, true, complete enlightenment; those individuals, in future time, will hold in mind, grasp, and protect this Dharma of the pure and true. They will certainly know how to present this Dharma of the pure and true.

Therefore, you should know that they will guard the holy Dharma in future bad times. Why? These individuals who have aroused bodhicitta in the past, will also undoubtedly be able to guard and hold this unsurpassable Dharma of the pure and true in the future.

(d). **Having Cleared Away Various Wrong Conceptions About These Points, Resolving Their Meaning As It Is**

Objection: The Mother of the Victorious Ones says:

Children of the gods,¹³⁶⁷ form itself is omniscient knowledge of all aspects. Omniscient knowledge of all aspects itself is form. The unshared phenomena of buddhahood themselves are omniscient knowledge of all aspects. Omniscient knowledge of all aspects itself is the unshared phenomena of buddhahood.

Are not suchness and omniscience defined there as forms, and so forth, being empty of themselves and recognizing and realizing that?

Answer: Not really. Those words were spoken with the intention that the suchness of forms is the pristine wisdom of omniscience. Words to that effect are found in this very sūtra:

Forms themselves are omniscient knowledge of all aspects itself. Feelings, conceptualized perceptions, formations, and consciousnesses themselves up to knowledge of all aspects itself are also [omniscient] knowledge of all aspects itself. Why? It is like this: The suchness of forms is the suchness that is omniscient knowledge of all aspects. Suchness is one. The suchness of feelings... The suchness of the eighteen unshared qualities of a buddha is the suchness of omniscient knowledge of all aspects. Suchness is one....

With the intention of these points, it says, “When the suchness of form is known. the meeting point [that is the nature of all phenomena] and the extent of all phenomena is known.” There, and so forth, this is extensively taught.

Objection: Nāgārjuna’s *Root Verses on the Middle Way* says:

As there are no phenomena
That do not arise dependently,
There are no phenomena
That are not emptiness.

Since that is taught, what arises dependently must be emptiness, and whatever is emptiness must be dependently arisen. Since there are no phenomena that do not arise dependently, and whatever arises dependently is empty of itself, all emptiness is self-emptiness.

Answer: Since some people think like that, I should explain this. This text does indeed teach that whatever arises interdependently is [self-emptiness, but it does not teach that whatever is emptiness arises interdependently. If it is maintained that whatever is emptiness arises interdependently, absolute dharmatā, the pure and true ultimate, and so forth, all the synonyms of the ground of emptiness [of other] would arise dependently, because they are [one kind of] emptiness. Then it would also have to be maintained that they are compounded, impermanent, false, deceptive, and so forth. That would not be right, because there would be major faults of contradiction. The *Mother of the Victorious Ones* says:

Subhūti, it is taught that when there is valid production of what is conventionally true, effects are created; but it cannot be taught that what is absolutely true creates effects....

Also, the *Sūtra That Definitively Comments on the Intention* says:

Subhūti, it is like this: Suchness, the absolute, along with the selflessness of [relative] phenomena [within it,] do not arise as fruitions of causes. They are not compounded. They do not become non-absolute. No absolute other than that absolute should be sought. Permanent in permanent time, everlasting in everlasting time, whether tathāgatas arise or not, the dharmatā of dharmas, the dhātu of the existence [and non-existence] of dharmas, **is always completely changeless**. It [always] exists [as it is] and never **changes into** anything else.

There, and so forth, these points are extensively explained. If absolute truth did not transcend interdependent arising, even the ultimate truth of cessation would not transcend interdependent arising. It would [be] impermanent, false, and deceptive. The absurdity would follow that it could not be an absolute object of refuge. The *Śrīmāla-devī Sūtra* says:

Blessed One, of these four noble truths, three truths are impermanent. One truth is permanent. How so? Blessed One, it is

because three of these truths are included in what has the characteristic of being compounded.

Blessed One, what has the characteristic of being compounded is impermanent.

Blessed One, what is impermanent has the characteristics of being false and deceptive.

Blessed One, what has the characteristics of being false and deceptive is not true and is impermanent. Therefore, it is not a refuge.

Blessed One, since that is so, the noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering are not true in [absolute] reality. They are impermanent. Therefore, they are not a refuge.

Blessed One, one of these truths transcends objects [that are] compounded.

Blessed One, what transcends objects [that are] compounded is permanent.

Blessed One, what is permanent [is] non-deceptive.

Blessed One, what [is] non-deceptive, **the truth of cessation of suffering**, is true and permanent. Therefore, it is a refuge.

Blessed One, since that is so, among these truths, [only] the truth of the cessation of suffering is really true, permanent, and a refuge.

Blessed One, the truth of cessation, **pervading space**, transcending the objects of consciousness of all sentient beings, is inconceivable. It is not within the realm of experience of Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas.

Also, Nāgārjuna's *Root Verses on the Middle Way* says:

The Blessed One said that whatever phenomena
May be deceptive, those are falsities.
All compounded things are deceptive phenomena.
So, all compounded things are falsities.

A passage cited in a commentary on that stanza explains, "All compounded things have the characteristics of falsity and deceptiveness," and so forth, extensively. [In brief,] all that is compounded and interdependently arising is indeed [self-]emptiness. However, maintaining that all that is emptiness arises interdependently is mistaken, because absolute emptiness transcends interdependent arising, and that kind of profound emptiness is the entirely [unconditioned] ultimate.

Objection: That contradicts **what is said in Nāgārjuna's Commentary on Bodhicitta:**

The relative is explained as emptiness.
 Emptiness alone is relative.
 As with the produced and impermanence,
 Without the one, the other is certainly absent.

Answer: There is no such fault. “Emptiness” in this case is the self-emptiness of the interdependently arising. Nāgārjuna is saying that self-emptiness and interdependent arising are logically equivalent. We make the same assertion.

Objection: If the absolute, dharmatā, is not empty of its own essence, that contradicts the teaching that all phenomena are essenceless.

Answer: There is no fault, because the intentions of these statements are not contradictory. How so?

Imagined things are natureless, because they have no intrinsic, defining characteristics. Except for **being established merely** as erroneous things of the relative, they are not established even as things of the true relative.

Dependent things are natureless because, although they exist as essences that arise from others within the [true] relative, they have no [intrinsic], self-arising natures. Therefore, in reality, they are not established at all.

Because they are natureless like that, like that, both the imagined and the dependent are empty of themselves. However, the ground in which these two are non-existent, perfectly established dharmatā, is not empty of its own intrinsic nature. It is the ground of the non-existence of other [imagined and dependent phenomena] of the natureless relative. That ground is the essence of absolute truth, svābhavikakāya, the kāya of the inherent nature, the enlightened, the luminous nature, innate pristine wisdom, the completely pure nature, the self-existing nature, and the naturally abiding enlightened family.

To know naturelessness like that is to realize the Middle [Way] that does not fall into [dichotomous] extremes like existence and non-existence, eternalism and nihilism, and exaggeration and denigration.

Therefore, [if you know naturelessness in that way,] you will not degenerate from the middle path. The *Sūtra that Definitively Comments on the Intention* says:

What capable person would say, without a hidden intention,
 “Phenomena are natureless, phenomena are unborn,
 Phenomena are unceasing and pacified from the start,
 And yet, all phenomena are naturally nirvāṇa?”

“Characteristics are essenceless, arising is essenceless,
 The absolute is essenceless.”¹³⁶⁸ That is what I say.
 Whatever capable person knows my intention like that
 Will not go upon a path of degeneration.

Also, the venerable noble one Asaṅga says:

What is the intention of saying in the very vast [Dharma,]
 “Phenomena are natureless?” That is said because 1) [relative]
 phenomena do not arise from themselves; 2) [relative] phenomena
 have no nature of their own; 3) no intrinsic essences [of relative
 phenomena] exist; and 4) [relative] phenomena do not really have
 the characteristics apprehended by child-like beings.

Also:

5) characteristics in the natures of imagined [phenomena] are non-
 existent; 6) production in the natures of dependent [phenomena]
 non-existent; and 7) the perfectly established is [the ground of]
 absolute essencelessness of all such [phenomena] as the above.

That has the same meaning as what Maitreya says in the *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras*:

If non-existent emptiness is known,
 And likewise, emptiness that is existent,
 As well as emptiness of the nature of things,
 Then it is said that emptiness is known.

Because the imagined and the dependent are incidental, they have no
 intrinsic essences. Therefore, their emptiness is emptiness of themselves.

Because perfectly established dharmatā is the natural state without
 essences of other things, it is emptiness of other.

[It follows from “all relative dharmas or phenomena are essenceless” that
 all relative dharmas or phenomena do not exist.]

It does not follow from “all [relative] dharmas or phenomena are
 essenceless” that their intrinsic essence, dharmatā, does not exist, because
 dharmas and dharmatā are different. There are innumerable refutations in
 scripture and reasoning to maintaining “[relative] dharmas and dharmatā
 are indivisible.”

When it is said in texts, “dharmatā is essenceless,” these words are taught
 with the intention that the essences of other, [relative] things are non-
 existent within dharmatā.¹³⁶⁹ These words cannot be [coherently]
 understood as saying, “dharmatā is empty of its own intrinsic essence.”
 That would contradict innumerable scriptures of the ultimate definitive
 meaning.

Similarly, the statement “self-perpetuating [relative] phenomena are
 impermanent, suffering, selfless, and impure” does not refute the
 statement “absolute dharmakāya is pure, true selfhood, blissful, and
 permanent.” The *Śrīmāla-devī Sūtra* says:

Blessed One, there are sentient beings who perceive the absolute
 Tathāgata with faith as permanent, blissful, selfhood, and pure.

Blessed One, those sentient beings are not wrong **in their view**. Those are sentient beings whose view is correct.

Why? Because, Blessed One, the dharmakāya of the Tathāgata is the perfection of permanence, the perfection of bliss, the perfection of true selfhood, and the perfection of purity.

Blessed One, therefore, sentient beings who see the dharmakāya of the Tathāgata **as being pure, true selfhood, blissful, and permanent**, see [dharmakāya] purely and truly.

Blessed One, those who see purely and truly are children of the Blessed One, who are born from his mind, from the teachings of his mouth, and from his Dharma. They are called emanations of Dharma and participants in the Dharma.

That is so, because views in accord with reality are faultless. The same sūtra says that views of eternity and nothingness are faulty when they are not in accord with the absolute; but they are faultless when they are in accord with the absolute:

Blessed One, there are two views called extreme views. What are these two? They are the view of eternalism and the view of nihilism.

Blessed one, when compounded things are viewed as impermanent, that is not an **extreme**, nihilistic view of them. **Since it is in accord with the absolute**, that is a correct view of [compounded things].

Blessed One, when **great** nirvāṇa is viewed as permanent, that is not an [extreme,] eternalistic view. **Since it is in accord with the absolute**, that is a correct view of **great [nirvāṇa]**.

When some say that this text contradicts the *Commentary to the Sublime Continuum*, that is an inept fabrication. The *Śrīmāla-devī Sūtra* teaches that things should be viewed as they are in occasions of discrimination [in subsequent attainment,] but nothing at all should be viewed in occasions of [formless] meditation without proliferation. These two teachings have no fault of contradiction, because these two occasions are separate.

Objection: All consciousness is compounded. Therefore, even consciousness of the perfection of prajñā and the pristine wisdom of all aspects are compounded. However, dharmatā, suchness, and so forth, are uncompounded; therefore, consciousness and dharmatā cannot be synonyms.

Answer: Not exactly. It is necessary to know the divisions of prajñā and pristine wisdom according to the two truths. The prajñā and pristine wisdom realized within the truth of the path are indeed compounded, relative [phenomena of consciousness]. However, the uncompounded prajñā and pristine wisdom belonging to the truth of cessation are synonyms of dharmatā. [They are neither compounded nor relative, nor consciousness.] Therefore, there is no fault.

Objection: Pristine wisdom is the perceiver that knows [dharmatā,] and dharmatā is the object known [by the perceiver pristine wisdom.] It is not possible for these two to have the same meaning, any more than form and the eye consciousness [that perceives it have the same meaning.]

Answer: There is no fault. Knower and known being separate accords with relative knowledge of things other [than one's own relative mind. On the other hand,] knower and known being one and the same [corresponds to] absolute self-knowledge. Absolute self-knowledge is dharmadhātu, self-aware pristine wisdom, absolute enlightened mind; the inseparability of emptiness and compassion, skillful means and prajñā, and bliss and emptiness.

The union of such dualities as one is called the level of neutrality or androgyny. This is the [absolute] union of EVAM, AHAM, HAMKŚA, and ĀLIKĀLI,¹³⁷⁰ the triangle of bindus, the vajra bhaga, the vajra lotus, Vajrasattva, the vajra sun and moon, vajra semen and blood, vajra day and night, the vajra [waxing and waning lunar] phases, the vajra [northern and southern solar] transits.

It is also the inseparable unity in one taste of the absolute father and mother deities and the maṇḍala structure they inhabit, Kālacakra, the [unified] wheel of time; Hevajra; Cakrasaṃvara, the binder of the cakras into unity; Guhyasamāja, the secret assembly; Māyājāla, the [pervasive] net of illusion; the vajra Four Seats; Vajra HŪṃkāra; Vajra Ḍākinī; the Ocean of Ḍākinīs; and so forth.

Objection: If absolute dharmatā is not empty of itself, but empty of other, that is like the trivial, partial emptiness of the Indian extremists, in which the three realms are never totally empty. Your partial emptiness [of other, but not of self,] is the kind espoused by the Indian extremists.¹³⁷¹

Answer: Emptiness of other is not partial emptiness, because, [like the doctrine of self-emptiness, it maintains that] all [describable] phenomena are empty.¹³⁷²

Objection: If all phenomena are empty, then dharmatā is empty, because dharmatā is included within all [phenomena].¹³⁷³

Answer: [Even though all phenomena¹³⁷⁴ are empty,] emptiness of all and everything is impossible, because emptiness of dharmatā [and its intrinsic qualities] is impossible. A ground of emptiness of all [relative] phenomena is possible, [because it actually exists] as dharmatā. However, a ground of emptiness of dharmatā is impossible, because it is refuted by innumerable, absurd consequences, **like dharmatā not being omnipresent among phenomena**. Emptiness of all and emptiness of all [saṃsāric] phenomena are very different. The [absolute] way things are is empty of saṃsāric phenomena, but it is not empty of the [absolute] nature of phenomena, dharmatā [with its intrinsic qualities]. This refutes maintaining that: 1) [relative] dharmas and dharmatā are different aspects

of one essence and that 2) dharmatā, [the nature of phenomena,] is a [relative] phenomenon, so that dharmas and dharmatā are the same kind of thing and not different at all. They are different in a way that precludes their both being present in one essence.¹³⁷⁵

Objection: That contradicts the Sūtra that Definitively Comments on the Intention:

The essences of the compounded realms and the absolute
Are characterized as neither the same nor different.
Those who conceive of them as the same or different
Are persons who do not abide within the proper approach.¹³⁷⁶

There is it not taught that the two truths are neither one nor different?

Answer: This sūtra refutes [both] 1) that the two truths truly exist as [different aspects of one and] the same essence, and 2) that they truly exist as two different essences.

That is so because 1) the absolute essence is established as the fundamental way things are, but 2) the essence of the relative is not established at all.

There are indeed other explanations, according to which the two truths, with their two ways of being true, apparent, and empty, are said neither to have different essences nor to exist as a single aspect.¹³⁷⁷ When these [differences] are said [without qualification] to be non-existent, the two [different] ways in which they are viewed as nothingness are not distinguished, but mixed into one [cacophonous void]. These are only the ravings of people maddened by that toxic approach.

Objection: Suchness liberated from the coverings of the afflictive emotions is not sugatagarbha, because it is said:

Blessed One, when this same dharmakāya of the tathāgatas is not liberated from the coverings of the afflictive emotions, it is called “sugatagarbha.”

Answer: Since some people think that way, I should explain it. Suchness is taught to pervade the three occasions of every individual: 1) impure, 2) both pure and impure, and 3) totally pure.

[Sugatagarbha being all-pervading] is like the space of the sky pervading a certain area, whether clouds exist there or not. According to the tantras, suchness is neither exclusively pure or exclusively impure, because it pervades all individuals, defiled or otherwise. Suchness abides with defilements in some individuals, but it is undefiled in others. However, there are no such divisions in suchness itself, as there are no divisions in space itself, whether clouds exist in it or do not.

With this intention, the *Holy Golden Light* says that the essence of a Tathāgata and sugatagarbha are synonyms.

The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* and others say that buddha nature, natural nirvāṇa, and the dhātu of selfhood are synonyms.

The *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* says that sugatagarbha, dharmatā, and the perfectly established are synonyms.

The *Tantra of the Expression of Mañjuśrī's Absolute Names* says that the vajra essence, the essence of all the buddhas, and the essence of all the tathāgatas are synonyms of the absolute.

The Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra says that sugatagarbha is synonymous with victorious one, tathāgata, self-arisen buddhahood, the level of buddhahood, inexhaustible dharmatā, treasure of Dharma, tathāgata nature, sugata body, meditation on the kāya of the victorious ones, the tathāgata family, dharmatā, and the pristine wisdoms of the buddhas.

The *Sublime Continuum* and its commentary say that sugatagarbha is synonymous with dharmakāya, tathāgata, absolute truth, and the great nirvāṇa.

Most of the sūtras I have cited in this work, and many other texts as well, teach this extensively; so there is no problem with saying that the above terms are synonyms.

(e). **How All Error is Abandoned Through the Correct View that Realizes Such Points as They Are**

By abandoning all errors, **reality** will be realized, as it is by the correct view. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

Child of noble family, at certain times there are sentient beings who view: what has selfhood¹³⁷⁸ as not having selfhood, and what is selfless¹³⁷⁹ as having a self; what is permanent as impermanent,¹³⁸⁰ and what is impermanent as permanent;¹³⁸¹ what is not bliss as bliss,¹³⁸² and what is bliss as not bliss;¹³⁸³ what is completely pure as completely impure,¹³⁸⁴ and what is completely impure as completely pure;¹³⁸⁵ what is unceasing as ceasing,¹³⁸⁶ and what is ceasing as unceasing;¹³⁸⁷ what is evil deeds as not being evil deeds,¹³⁸⁸ and what is not evil deeds as evil deeds;¹³⁸⁹ what is **minor or** light evil deeds as heavy, and heavy evil deeds as light;¹³⁹⁰ what is a vehicle is not a vehicle,¹³⁹¹ and what is not a vehicle is a vehicle;¹³⁹² what is a path as not a path,¹³⁹³ and what is not a path as a path;¹³⁹⁴ what is true enlightenment as non-enlightenment,¹³⁹⁵ and what is non-enlightenment as true enlightenment;¹³⁹⁶ what is suffering as non-suffering,¹³⁹⁷ and non-suffering as suffering;¹³⁹⁸ what is the origin of suffering as not being the origin of suffering;¹³⁹⁹ what is cessation as non-cessation;¹⁴⁰⁰ what is truth as non-truth;¹⁴⁰¹ what is relative as absolute,¹⁴⁰² and the absolute as relative;¹⁴⁰³ what is a refuge **place** as not a refuge **place**;¹⁴⁰⁴ **and actually** saying that authentic words of the Buddha are the words of Māra,¹⁴⁰⁵ and that words of Māra¹⁴⁰⁶ are the authentic Word of the

Buddha.

When these [harmful, wrong views] occur, at that time the Tathāgatas teach this primordial Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra.

And:

Child of noble family, “buddha nature” is the [non-]empty absolute **when it is not empty of the relative**. The [non-]empty absolute is “self-arising pristine wisdom.” Here, “empty,” **has the sense that everything empty of its own essence, is total nothingness in which** neither the empty nor the non-empty are seen. Those with prajñā see what is empty of its own essence, the relative, and **what is non-empty of its own essence, the absolute**; the permanent **absolute** and the impermanent **compounded relative**; the suffering **of the three realms** and the bliss **of the ‘other’ three realms**; **absolute, pure self** and the selfless **relative**.

[Those with prajñā] see all¹⁴⁰⁷ **of the way things are correctly in terms of the two truths**: 1) “The empty [relative], in which **everything is empty of its own essence**,” is all of saṃsāra. All the topics up to selflessness, impermanence and suffering, are saṃsāra. 2) The [absolute that is] not empty **of its own essence is great** nirvāṇa. **Eternal, blissful, pure** “self” is complete nirvāṇa, **pervading space**.

If these are realized, the Middle Way that abandons the two extremes is realized.

The other approach, seeing everything as empty and not seeing anything non-empty at all is not “the path of the Middle Way.” That is seeing everything as selflessness, **impermanence, and suffering**, but not seeing **permanence, bliss, and pure selfhood** [at all]. That is not “the path of the Middle Way.”

“The path of the Middle Way” is buddha nature. The Middle Way is **a third alternative that abandons the two extremes**. Since the meaning of “buddha nature” like that, buddha nature is permanent, changeless, and not transitory. **It always abides pervading space**. However, because they are covered in ignorance, all sentient beings cannot see it. Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas can see everything [relative] as empty, but they cannot see the **permanent, blissful, pure self**. Therefore, they do not attain absolute emptiness, **self-arising pristine wisdom, pervading space**. Therefore, they do not have or practice the middle path to seeing buddha nature. [Therefore, they do not attain true, complete, enlightenment.]

And:

Child of noble family, those who see all phenomena¹⁴⁰⁸ as being without permanence, self, bliss, and complete purity, and also see all non-phenomena, **absolute dharmatā**, as being without permanence, self, bliss, and complete purity do not see buddha nature. **They have**

fallen into the extreme of nihilism.

In this case, “all **phenomena**” refers to saṃsāra. “All non-phenomena” refers to the three jewels of **absolute dharmatā**. **Abandoning the two extremes, these people need to abide in the middle or center, as a third alternative.**

Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas see all phenomena as being without permanence, self, bliss, and complete purity. They also see all non-phenomena,¹⁴⁰⁹ **absolute dharmatā**, as being without permanence, self, bliss, and complete purity. Therefore, they do not see buddha nature, **because they have fallen into extremes.**

Tenth level bodhisattvas see all phenomena as being without permanence, self, bliss, and complete purity. They also partially see all non-phenomena, **absolute dharmatā**, as being permanent, true selfhood, bliss, and complete purity. Since that is the case, they see only a tenth part of dharmatā.

The blessed buddhas, **because they do not fall into extremes and apprehend perfectly**, see all phenomena as being without permanence, self, bliss, and complete purity. They also see all non-phenomena, **absolute dharmatā**, as being permanent, true selfhood, bliss, and complete purity. Therefore, they see buddha nature [fully] like a medicinal emblic myrobalan fruit placed in the palm of their hands. Since that is the case, [the buddhas’] meditative absorption of Going as a Hero is called “ultimate.”

And:

Conceptualized perception of selflessness as a self and conceptualized perception of [the true] self as selfless are [both] erroneous. **To explain these points more extensively**, worldly people say that **relative** selfhood exists, but the Buddha says that **absolute** selfhood exists. Worldly people do indeed say that self exists, **but they do not realize that it is the pure self**, buddha nature, **that** exists. Therefore, they conceptually misperceive that self as **relative** selflessness. What [truly] exists as a self in the Buddhadharma is [only] buddha nature, **dharmatā**.

Thus, worldly people say that the Buddhadharma teaches **universal** selflessness. They conceptually perceive **the true** self, **dharmatā**, as selflessness.

And:

In the religion of Indian extremists, there is no **teaching of a self** of dharmatā.¹⁴¹⁰ The “self of **dharmatā**” is the **absolute** Tathāgata. How so? The limitless kāya of **dharmatā** is called “permanent,” because no nets of doubt exist about it, it is not produced **by a cause and conditions**, and it does not receive **self-perpetuating, saṃsāric existence**.

And:

“Pristine wisdom” is like this: It views the **absolute** tathāgata as permanent, bliss, true selfhood, and completely pure. It views all sentient beings as having buddha nature. It views the characteristics of phenomena as **of two kinds**. There is realization of **the absolute and relative as respectively** non-empty and empty; permanent and impermanent; bliss and not bliss; self and without self; completely pure and completely impure; indivisible and divisible into essentially different phenomena; with different phenomena not arising and arising from conditions; with different phenomena not arising and arising as effects of conditions.

Well-realizing **the divisions of the two truths** in that way is called “possessing prajñā.” **Other ways of realizing them are not.**

And:

At that time the Blessed One spoke to the monks saying, “Listen well and retain this totally in your minds. You are like a drunken person, for example, who knows only words and syllables, but does not understand their meaning. What meaning? For example, a drunken person sees the sun and moon as circling, although they do not really circle.¹⁴¹¹ Ordinary beings [like you do] something similar. Completely covered by the ignorance of the afflictive emotions, you produce erroneous states of mind. You conceptually perceive the self **of dharmatā** as selfless, the permanent, **absolute emptiness**, as impermanent, **absolute emptiness** that is completely pure as completely impure, and **absolute emptiness** that is bliss as suffering.

Because you are completely covered by the afflictive emotions, you perceive conceptually like that, and you cannot apprehend [non-conceptual] reality. You are like that drunken person who generates a conceptualized perception of **the sun and moon** as circling, though they do not really circle.

“Self” means “the **absolute** buddha.”

“Permanent **dharmatā**” means “dharmakāya.”

“Blissful **dharmatā**” means great nirvāṇa.

“Completely pure **dharmatā**,” means **absolute** phenomena.

Then why do you monks say that anyone who perceives a self is revolving in saṃsāra due to pride? According to what you say, all selfhood is impermanent, suffering and selfless. Your persistently conceptualized perception of that has no reality. Because you persist in saying these three things, **that we are impermanent, suffering and selfless**, I will explain [four teachings of] what is better than these three.

Grasping **saṃsāric** suffering as bliss and grasping blissful **nirvāṇa and sugatagarbha** as suffering is wrong Dharma. Grasping **saṃsāric**

impermanence as bliss and grasping permanent **nirvāṇa and sugatagarbha** as impermanent is wrong Dharma. Grasping **saṃsāric** selflessness as selfhood and grasping the true selfhood of **nirvāṇa and sugatagarbha** as selfless is wrong Dharma. Grasping **saṃsāric** complete impurity as complete purity and grasping completely pure **nirvāṇa and sugatagarbha** as completely impure is wrong Dharma.

These four kinds of wrong Dharma cannot be consistently expressed by those who speak in accord with the pure and true.

And:

In the world, permanence, bliss, selfhood, and complete purity exist **as mere imputations**. Worldly Dharmas are expressible¹⁴¹² and unreal. In the world-transcending, permanence, bliss, selfhood, and complete purity exist **absolutely**. World-transcending Dharmas are expressible and real.

How so? With three kinds of error of erroneously conceptualized perceptions, thoughts, and views, worldly people view: 1) blissful **nirvāṇa and sugatagarbha** as suffering, 2) permanent **nirvāṇa and sugatagarbha** as impermanent, 3) the true selfhood **of nirvāṇa and sugatagarbha** as selfless, and 4) completely pure **nirvāṇa and sugatagarbha** as completely impure.

Therefore, worldly people are wrong. Because they are wrong, worldly beings know how to speak words, but do not know how to understand their meaning. What is meant by “their meaning” here?

1. The selfless is called “saṃsāra.” “Self” is the Tathāgata. “
2. The impermanent” [includes] Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. “The permanent” is the dharmakāya of the Tathāgata.
3. “Suffering” refers to all extremists. “Bliss” is complete nirvāṇa, [beyond extremes.]
4. “The completely impure” is compounded phenomena. “The completely pure” is the pure and true **nature of** phenomena ¹⁴¹³ of buddha and bodhisattvas.

Well-realizing these distinctions, is called “the non-erroneous view of perceptions and mind.” When our view is non-erroneous in that way, both the expressed words and their meaning are known. Whoever wishes to completely abandon the four kinds of error above must know in that way that nirvāṇa and sugatagarbha are permanent, blissful, true selfhood, and completely pure....

Also, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, as translated by Devacandra, says:

Also, at that time, like king Vimalaprabhā [himself], as many lay practitioners as the grains of sand in two Ganges rivers, received the five fundamental precepts: [1) not cutting off life, 2) not taking what is not given, 3) not engaging in wrongful sex, 4) not speaking

falsely and 5) not drinking alcoholic drinks.]

Having discipline, armor,¹⁴¹⁴ and good qualities, they wanted to know everything only as pairs. The suffering of *saṃsāra* and the bliss of *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*, the impermanence of *saṃsāra* and the permanence of *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*, the selflessness of *saṃsāra* and the selfhood of *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*, the emptiness of *saṃsāra* and the non-emptiness of *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*, the absence of suchness of *saṃsāra* and the suchness of *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*, the lack of refuge of *saṃsāra* and the refuge of *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*, the beings of *saṃsāra* and the absence of beings of *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*, the instability of *saṃsāra* and the stability of *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*, the absence of peace of *saṃsāra* and the peace of *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*, the compounded nature of *saṃsāra* and the absence of compounded nature of *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*, the non-enduring nature of *saṃsāra* and the everlasting nature of *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*, the inauthenticity of *saṃsāra* and the authenticity of *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*, the falsity of *saṃsāra* and the truth of *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*, and *saṃsāra* not being natural *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*, the characteristics not being quite opposites in this last case.

And:

Ask about any doubts, hesitation or two-mindedness you have about *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha* being respectively empty and not empty, impermanent and permanent, non-refuge and refuge, going and non-going,¹⁴¹⁵ non-support and support, non-everlasting and everlasting, unstable and stable, sentient beings and not sentient beings, not pure and true and pure and true, untrue and true, non-*nirvāṇa* and *nirvāṇa*, non-secret and secret, dual, by having *saṃsāric* grasper and grasped, and non-dual, [as pristine wisdom,] and similarly, for many other opposites of phenomena. I will cut all your nets of such doubts. I will teach you the supreme amṛita of *nirvāṇa* and *sugataṅgarbha*. After that, I will pass into final *nirvāṇa*....

Asaṅga's *Commentary on the Sublime Continuum* says:

Here, "those who take joy in the erroneous" refers to Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas. Why so? It is like this. Tathāgatagarbha should be meditated on as permanent; but rather than meditating perceiving tathāgatagarbha as permanent, Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas take joy in doing the opposite. They meditate perceiving it as impermanent.

Again, tathāgatagarbha should be meditated on as bliss; but rather than meditating within perception of tathāgatagarbha as bliss, Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas take joy in doing the opposite. They meditate perceiving [tathāgatagarbha] as suffering.

Again, tathāgatagarbha should be meditated on as selfhood; but rather than meditating perceiving tathāgatagarbha as selfhood, Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas take joy in doing the opposite. they meditate perceiving [tathāgatagarbha] as selfless.

Again, tathāgatagarbha should be meditated on as pure; but rather than meditating perceiving tathāgatagarbha as pure, Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas take joy in doing the opposite. They meditate perceiving [tathāgatagarbha] as impure.

By this [series of erroneous meditations, “those who take joy in the erroneous”] take joy in a path that is incompatible with attaining dharmakāya. Therefore, it is explained that this dhātu or garbha that has the characteristics of supreme permanence, bliss, selfhood, and beauty is not within the realm of Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas.

How **sugatagarbha** is not within the realm of those who take joy in the erroneous, perceiving **everything** as impermanent, suffering, selfless, and ugly is extensively established by the Blessed One in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*. This is taught through the example of a jewel in the water of a pond, as follows:

O Monks, for example, when springtime, the time of the hot season. comes, people put on bathing garments. They all play in the water [of a pond] with their ornaments and playthings. Then one of them places an actual vaidūrya¹⁴¹⁶ jewel in the water. Then, for the sake of **getting** that vaidūrya, all of them, put aside their adornments and go into the water.

Through the power of that jewel, the water in that pond looks like the light of the jewel. Those people, seeing that the water appears like that, perceive its good qualities thinking, “How wonderful, a jewel!”

They grasp the pebbles and gravel in that pond **with their hands**, thinking they are the jewel. Then they pull them **out**, thinking, “I have found the jewel.”

When they have pulled [their gravel-filled hands] out [of the water,] they look at them on the bank. Then they enter into conceptualized perception thinking, “This is no jewel!” Then someone there who is clear-minded and skilled in means finds the actual jewel.

O Monks, **like the people who grasped the gravel in the pond, thinking it was a jewel**, you who do not know the jewel-like suchness of phenomena perform many [futile] meditations. You grasp at all kinds of conceptions like “All is impermanent, all is suffering, all is selfless, all is ugly.” None of these presentations [that result from] all these [meditations] grasp the [actual] meaning **of the ultimate**.

O Monks, do not be like the people **whose minds grasped** the pebbles and gravel in the pond **as a jewel**. Be [like the clear-minded

person who was] skilled in means. As you perform your many meditations, grasping [conceptions that] “All is impermanent, all is suffering, all is selfless, all is ugly,” you have no **realization, no seeing, and no attainment of ultimate** permanence, bliss, true selfhood, and beauty.

[Correct] presentation of the absolute suchness of phenomena is as presented there. Erroneous teachings should be understood as they are in the sūtra. When the Śrīmāla-devī Sūtra speaks of “those whose minds have wandered away from emptiness,” it is speaking about bodhisattvas who newly enter into the pure and true, then degenerate from the way of real, absolute emptiness that sees and realizes tathāgatagarbha.

c. **Summary of the Explained Meaning, with Instructions and Aspirations**

By [holding] the pure, correct view, we must realize well how phenomena are and how they abide. Our realization must be in accord with reality. This reality is the reality of the two truths, 1) [relative] saṃsāra, incidental defilements, and 2) [absolute] nirvāṇa, tathāgatagarbha, and so forth.

We must realize properly their respective natures or characteristics abide. Some phenomena abide as impermanence, suffering, emptiness, selflessness, impurity, and so forth. Some abide as the opposite.

Likewise, we must realize the difference between emptiness of self and emptiness of other; self-arising and rising from others; and self-knowing and knowing others; Within self-knowing, we must realize the difference between self-knowing consciousness and self-knowing pristine wisdom. Within self-knowing pristine wisdom, we must differentiate self-arisen and other-arisen pristine wisdom; [absolute] pristine wisdom of the truth of cessation and [relative] pristine wisdom of the truth of the path; **the self-awareness** of pristine wisdom of the pure and true and the self-awareness of [conceptualized] suchness; [pristine wisdom of] the compounded and uncompounded perfectly established; oneness and non-oneness of knower and known; consciousness and pristine wisdom; grasper and grasped; the three realms **or worlds; and** whether their arising and cessation exist or do not exist; they transcend the momentary or not; their reality is concealed or not; they are buddhahood and dharmakāya or not; and so forth.

We must realize the difference between separability or inseparability of the two truths; the four noble truths; the three kāyas; saṃsāra and nirvāṇa; cause and effect; ground and fruition; grasper and grasped; consciousness and pristine wisdom; the support and the supported; expresser and expressed; the vowels and consonants; the skandhas, sense constituents, sense sources, and so forth; **the principal one and retinue;**¹⁴¹⁷ ~~the three~~ **times, realms, vehicles, and occasions; and the six realms of beings.**

We must realize the difference between whether faults of contradiction exist or not when something is understood as existent, non-existent, **eternal, or nothingness**. If faults of contradiction do exist, we must realize whether there is a third alternative or not. We must realize the difference between existing and not existing in the ultimate way things are. We must realize the difference between transcending or not transcending interdependently arisen phenomena, phenomena of consciousness, and instantaneous phenomena. We must realize the difference between the horns of the [conventional] dilemmas of existing as a [relative] real thing or unreal non-thing, and being or not being beyond worldly examples. We must realize the difference between the natural state and incidental fabrications, or [primordial,] natural existence and being [conditionally] established by antidotes, for purity, freedom from defilements, non-pollution, peace, exclusion, cessation, abandoning, exhaustion, and subsiding, realization of such abandoning, and so forth.

We must realize the difference between what is established as non-existent and what remains as existent in teachings of the presence of intrinsic emptiness of self, sentient beings, the life of beings, living beings, and so forth; and in teachings of the absence of arising, cessation, production, characteristics, proliferation, change, extremes, and so forth, up to what is non-existent because it is purified or separated [from the real,] and what remains.

We must realize the difference between the middle [way] having or not having appearance. We must realize the difference between mind-only and Mind-only as absolute and relative, natural and fabricated, and innate and incidental. We must realize the difference between the two ways of naturelessness, according to something being empty of its own essence or empty of the essences of other things. We must realize the difference between the three kinds of naturelessness of the three natures. We must realize the difference between the kind of transformations where an essence is transformed and where it is not. We must realize the difference between something being empty of its own reality or empty of the reality of other things. We must realize the difference between teachings of phenomena being like dreams, illusions, and space conventionally and in absolute truth. We must realize the difference between teachings of non-existence of incidental defilements [in the relative and] the non-existence of incidental defilements in [absolute] sugatagarbha.

We must realize how to establish non-contradiction and harmony in the intention of seemingly contradictory assertions of existence and non-existence and transcending existence and non-existence; permanence and nothingness and transcending permanence and nothingness; naturelessness and being self-established by nature; essencelessness and the perfectly established kāya of the essence; the absolute that [can be characterized as] uncompounded and the absolute beyond compounded and uncompounded; the [absolute] place of all phenomena and no

phenomena abiding anywhere at all; sugatagarbha abiding in all phenomena and in none; differentiation of support and supported and the absence of both support and supported; selflessness and self; emptiness and non-emptiness; existence and non-existence; production and non-production; cessation and non-cessation; proliferation and absence of proliferation; emanation and gathering and absence of emanation and gathering; having many divisions and having none; being apprehended and being unapprehendable; appearing and not appearing to pristine wisdom and consciousness; being known and being unknowable; presence and absence of valid assertions and theses; nirvāṇa truly existing or not; the fruition being attained at a certain time and not; phenomena of productive actions being performed or [eternal] actionlessness; **the path existing or not**; and **pristine wisdom existing or not**.

We need to understand division: between the all grounds of consciousness and pristine wisdom; between the absolute existence of the natural enlightened family and the absolute non-existence of the developing enlightened family; between conceptual, distant meditation and non-conceptual, direct meditation [on emptiness] and both from subsequent attainment within the path; between produced fruitions and fruitions of separation; between absolute dharmakāya as the benefit for oneself and the relative kāyas of form as the benefit of others; between innate **abandonment and purification by meditation and [merely] imagined seeing of** conditioned abandonment and purification with their conditioned objects; between innate [pristine wisdom] and [its] conditioned obscuration by afflictive emotions and [innate] knowledge of omniscience [and its conditioned obscuration by dualistic knowables,] with their [respective] roots and mounts;¹⁴¹⁸ between antidotes of the prajñā of [formless] meditation [without proliferation] and antidotes of the pristine wisdom of subsequent attainment [that perceives and describes what exists and what does not exist, just as they are, and so forth,] along with the main points and roots of these; between [the kinds of truth in] the two truths, four noble truths, and twelve aspects of the truth of cessation.¹⁴¹⁹ between the [absolute] ground of purification, [relative] object purified from it, [conditioned] action [or process] of purification, [absolute] fruition of purification, the [conditioned] purifier, and the [primordial and conditioned] ways of purification; between provisional and definitive and ordinary and extraordinary for the ground, path, and fruition and for the view, meditation, and action.¹⁴²⁰

We need to understand the difference [in detail] and lack of difference [in essence and ultimate intention] between the three vehicles, trainings, turnings and natures. We need to understand the difference and lack of difference in having [and not having] the natures of cause and effect between sūtra and mantra, and so forth.¹⁴²¹

If all these are well understood there is the pure and true view. Otherwise there is not. There is not, if everything is understood as empty of itself, so that even the absolute is not established; *There is not, if everything is just viewed [pragmatically] according to the opinion of the world; There is not, if everything is just viewed [intellectually] according to Mind-only or Sautrāntika [abhidharma]; nor if [we lose eight of the distinctions between the two truths, so that even] the afflictions are identified as pristine wisdom.*

Therefore, be inseparable from the pure view that realizes well the intention of the profound sūtras and tantras, just as it is. The distinctions of that view's aspects are well resolved by the discriminating pristine wisdom [of subsequent attainment]. However, in the case of profound [formless] meditation, it is necessary to rest in conceptionless equality, free from proliferations. The accompanying activities and samayas must also be complete. These should be completely known as they are taught elsewhere.

Realizing well, just as they really are,
 the way things are and the way things are confused,
*Like seeing a white conch as white or yellow,*¹⁴²²
 May I and others quickly reach perfection
 In the highest means that quell confusion,
 Where view, meditation, and action are totally pure.

This ends the section on the occasion of the pure, excellent path.

Part Three

Fruition

3. **Explanation of Fruits of Separation and Produced Fruits of the Path**

a. **Teaching the Fruition of the Great Vehicle in General**

When we have completely perfected the two accumulations of merit and pristine wisdom of the path, through correct view, meditation, and action; the two obscurations of afflictive emotions and dualistic knowables that are to be abandoned are exhausted. From that occurring, the fruition, buddhahood, is attained. Maitreya's *Ornament for the Sūtras of the Great Vehicles* says:

Through the performance of hundreds of difficult actions,¹⁴²³
And the accumulation of numberless virtues,
Over a measureless number of eons of time,¹⁴²⁴
By exhausting a measureless number of obscurations,¹⁴²⁵

Omniscience **with the two purities** is attained,
That is not defiled by any obscurations.
As if a vessel of jewels were being opened,
Buddhahood itself is truly revealed.

Having gathered all virtues by hundreds of wearying hardships,¹⁴²⁶
And exhausted obscurations for the length of eminent eons,¹⁴²⁷
Conquering even the subtlest obscurations of levels,¹⁴²⁸
Enlightenment is like opening a vessel of potent jewels.

And:

Seeds of obscuration of afflictive emotions and knowables, that have
been possessed forever,¹⁴²⁹
Are totally overcome by extremely extensive great **means of**
abandonment,¹⁴³⁰

Transformed into total possession of the highest qualities of white
phenomena, attainment of buddhahood itself.¹⁴³¹
That is attained by totally¹⁴³² pure, non-conceptual prajñā,¹⁴³³ and

pristine wisdom of the path.¹⁴³⁴

The *Sublime Continuum* says:

“Natural luminosity,” like the sun and space,
though obscured by thick covering clouds of afflictions and
knowables,
Has all the spotless qualities of buddhahood,
The eternally stable swastika, attained by revelation
of non-conceptual dharmas, depending on pristine wisdom.

The inseparability of buddhahood,
Has, as revealed by pure phenomena,
A double character, like the sun in space,
Of pristine wisdom.¹⁴³⁵ and that which was abandoned.¹⁴³⁶

Also, [it is taught there how dharmakāya is characterized by five absences of being:] 1) without beginning, middle, and end; 2) without separation; 3) without dual extremes; 4) without the three;¹⁴³⁷ and 5) without conception. These are the signs of the [ultimate] essence, dharmadhātu, as they are seen in the meditation of [realized] yogins.¹⁴³⁸

[Also, it is taught how dharmakāya possesses five positive qualities:] 1) unfathomable,¹⁴³⁹ 2) transcending the sands of the Ganges,¹⁴⁴⁰ 3) inconceivable, 4) unequalled and 5) having virtues; That immaculate dhātu of the tathāgatas.¹⁴⁴¹ has abandoned all faults together with their seeds.

Then, regarding the form kāyas that arise from the blessings of dharmakāya, sambhogakaya [too has five qualities], like jewels of various forms: the kāya possessing light rays of various holy Dharmas, strives to bring forth benefits of liberating beings, with actions like a king of wish-fulfilling gems and appearance of various things whose natures are unestablished.

The Nirmāṇakāya, the Buddha who teaches the first turning, [has three qualities:] 1) making the worldly enter into the path of peace, 2) form causing ripening and 3) giving prophesies.¹⁴⁴² Of those who will¹⁴⁴³ always abide within this dharmakāya, just as the elements of form abide in space.

Buddhahood consists of the utterly wonderful, marvelous kāyas and pristine wisdoms, with their immeasurable, perfect buddha qualities, their unfathomable activities, and the immeasurable, vast nature [of them all] that is like space. Like a wish-fulfilling gem, tree, and so forth, buddhahood is the holy source of arising of all that is wished for by sentient beings.

- b. **Explanation of the Fruition of the Great Vehicle**
- (1). **Explanation of the Utterly Wonderful, Perfect Kāyas**
- (a). **Divisions of Kāya in the Ordinary Great Vehicle**
- 1'. **How the Profound Kāyas of the Fundamental Way Things Are**

Occur as a Single One

If you know the divisions of the two truths, you will not be confused about the Sage's Words teaching that the kāyas of a blessed one are one, two, three, four, and so forth. The ultimate kāya that is the way things are is resolved as the single kāya that is the absolute itself. Nāgārjuna's *Sixty Stanzas on Reasoning* says:

Nirvāṇa alone is truth,

And:

There are no phenomena but those of enlightenment.

And:

Except for those belonging to dharmadhātu,
Other phenomena are non-existent.

There it is taught that no phenomena exist in the fundamental way things are that do not belong to the single kāya, dharmadhātu. That is:

The single hard and solid vajra nature...

And:

The single truth without a second...

And:

Truth that is single and not two, the truth of cessation.

What is taught there is that the ultimate way things are is a single, absolute truth, **a single kāya** of dharmatā, a single pristine wisdom eye, and so forth. It is the one taste of many natures, knower and known as a single kāya that is solitary and without example.

2'. Division into Two Kāyas of the Two Truths

To benefit self and others there are absolute **dharmakāya**
And the relative **rūpakāya** that depends on it.
The qualities of the fruitions of separation and ripening,¹⁴⁴⁴
When added together make a total of sixty-four.

The place of the wealth [for oneself] that is the [ultimate] nature¹⁴⁴⁵
Is the [ultimate] kāya of absolute reality.
The sages' **rūpakāya** of symbolic communication
Is the place of [relative] wealth **that arises** for other beings.

The first of these kāyas possesses the **absolute** powers, and so forth.
These are [primordial] qualities [revealed by] separation.¹⁴⁴⁶
The second **kāya** possesses ripened qualities,¹⁴⁴⁷
Like the **relative** major marks, [the adornments] of great beings.

Dharmakāya, the [primordially,] perfectly established, changeless kāya of suchness, is a fruition of separation. It is replete with intrinsic qualities of separation like the **absolute [ten]** powers. Rūpakāya is a produced effect, with qualities like the [relative] major marks [that are causally] produced for those who possess non-erroneous, perfectly established, [conditioned] pristine wisdom.

These points clear away [wrong] assertions by some that 1) even dharmakāya is a produced, relative fruition, and 2) even rūpakāya is an absolute fruition of separation. Nāgārjuna's *Gate of Entry into the Three Kāyas* says:

Nirvāṇa with the skandhas¹⁴⁴⁸ is postulated
As the two rūpakāyas of the Sage.
Separate from all **compounded** skandhas,
Dharmakāya does not have these skandhas.

The assertions by some that 1) dharmakāya does not exist in sentient beings from the beginning, and 2) the form kāyas do exist in sentient beings from the beginning are, likewise, totally mistaken. The *Sublime Continuum* teaches extensively the previously presented two kinds of enlightened family: 1) the naturally abiding [in the absolute] without beginning and 2) the purely and truly received [relative] excellence. These are said to be [respectively:] "Like the treasure and the fruit tree," from the nine examples.

3'. Divisions of Three Kāyas Included Within the Two Truths

The three kāyas are 1) dharmakāya, 2) sambhogakāya, and 3) nirmāṇakāya. They are included within the two truths, [by dharmakāya being absolute and the other two kāyas being relative.] The *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* teaches this very clearly:

Also, the divisions of the kāyas of the buddhas
Are the **kāya** of nature, **the kāya** of perfect enjoyment,
And the other kāya of emanation, **nirmāṇakāya**.
The first of these, **dharmakāya**, supports the other two.

And:

It should be known that there are three different kāyas
Included within the kāyas of the buddhas.
These three kāyas benefit self¹⁴⁴⁹ and other,¹⁴⁵⁰
Together with the support of **dharmakāya**.

The *Holy Golden Light* also says very clearly that there is one absolute kāya and two relative ones. Also, the *Sūtra of Completely Perfect Enlightened Mind in the Palace of the Akaniṣṭa*¹⁴⁵¹ Realm says:

Dharmakāya is the assembly of **countless, [absolute]** buddha qualities, like the **absolute** powers, fearlessnesses, and unshared qualities that are non-dual with, and not different from, the

[ultimate] perfection of prajñā. Sambhogakāya is the [conditioned] kāya that arises from dharmakāya's blessings, depending on it as its ground. Nirmāṇakāyas are the **various kāyas, [that are illusory, dualistic body manifestations.]** They are ascertained to arise from the blessings of sambhogakāya, in accord with the interests of sentient beings.¹⁴⁵²

The *Ornament of Clear Realization* says:

The kāyas of the essence¹⁴⁵³ and enjoyment,¹⁴⁵⁴
Likewise, the other kāya of emanation,¹⁴⁵⁵
Are the dharmakāya together with its productions.
These are purely and truly described as four.

Some like Āryavimuktasena say that this refers to three kāyas. Others like the noble one Mañjuśrī in his *Brief Explanation of the Assertions of Our Own View* says four are referred to. Since this is merely a difference of whether or not the absolute kāya is differentiated into svābhavikakāya and dharmakāya, whichever way it is done, there is clearly no fault.

Whether three kāyas or four are presented, the two form kāyas are relative kāyas for symbolic communication. Together with one or two absolute kāyas there are three or four all together. This is very well-known in many famous texts of the ordinary Great Vehicle.

(b). **Divisions of Kāya, in Extraordinary Secret Mantra**

1'. **Divisions of Kāya from One to Five**

In the style of extraordinary secret mantra, the vajra kāya or mantra kāya, also called “the self of suchness” or “the pure self” is the unity of [everything as] Vajradhara or Vajrasattva. Within that single kāya of the ultimate, knower and known are the same. That is also the neutral level in which emptiness and compassion and prajñā and skillful means are mixed into one.

When aspects of **absolute** prajñā and skillful means, **absolute** emptiness and compassion, and so forth, are distinguished within that solitary reality, it is also the **absolute** two kāyas.

When aspects of **absolute** body, speech, and mind, the **absolute** three jewels, and so forth are distinguished within it, it is also the **absolute** three kāyas.

When aspects of the **absolute** four vajras,¹⁴⁵⁶ four knowledges,¹⁴⁵⁷ **four** manifestations of enlightenment, and so forth, are distinguished, it is also the **absolute** four kāyas.

When the previous four are distinguished along with the absolute pristine wisdom kāya, [or the kāya of great bliss,] there are five absolute kāyas. Mañjuśrī's *Brief Explanation of the Assertions of Our Own View* says:

The Buddha has the nature of five kāyas,

Pervasive self, as lord of five pristine wisdoms.

2'. **How Those Have the Same Meaning as the Natural Families**

Those kāyas are also the naturally pure one, two, three, four, and five families of tantra. The *Tantra of the Supreme First Buddha* says:

Three families, and five families,
One nature and a hundred families.

Also, the glorious *Hevajra Tantra* says:

The one, great mind that is the **absolute mind**,
Is symbolized in the form of five families.
From those same five families of deities,
There has been the arising of many thousands.¹⁴⁵⁸

All of these families have a single nature,
Great bliss that is the highest benefit.

Those words were already taught above. Six families or more should be known to be taught in accord with the teaching of the previous four on the occasion of the fruition. As many divisions and abbreviations of the natural families as may be taught are different divisions and summaries of the single inseparable essence.

(c). **How These are Taught by the Noble One Mañjuśrī**

Mañjuśrī's *Brief Explanation of the Assertions of Our Own View* says:

The Buddha Śākyamuni,
Due to thoughts of sentient beings,
Taught the kāyas as being
One, two, three, four, and five.

Buddha has no end and no beginning.
The primordial buddha has no partiality.
The undefiled, single eye of wisdom
Is the wisdom kāya of the Tathāgata.¹⁴⁵⁹

As it is with the [relative] kāya of form,
So it is with the buddhadharmakāya.
The treatises teach the refuges as three.¹⁴⁶⁰
They rise by the power of beings' aspirations.

By **respective** divisions of body, speech, and mind,
The kāyas are proclaimed as being three.
The kāyas of Dharma, enjoyment,¹⁴⁶¹ and emanation,¹⁴⁶²
Are practiced by people in the style of mantra.

The kāya of the essence, with enjoyment,¹⁴⁶³
And likewise, the other kāya of emanation,¹⁴⁶⁴
And dharmakāya with its productions,¹⁴⁶⁵
Are correctly explained as being four.¹⁴⁶⁶

Buddha has the nature of five kāyas,
 As pervasive self who is lord of the five-fold wisdoms.
 Possessing the crown of the lord of the five-fold buddhas,
 And holder of the five eyes without desire.¹⁴⁶⁷

The limitless collections of different forms
 Are that Lord's supreme nirmāṇakāya.¹⁴⁶⁸
 The limitless collections of different sounds¹⁴⁶⁹
 Are that Lord's supreme sambhogakāya.¹⁴⁷⁰

The limitless collections of different dharmas
 Are famed as the dharmakāya of that lord.¹⁴⁷¹
 Limitless collections of pristine wisdom¹⁴⁷²
 Are famed as the wisdom kāya of that Lord.

The limitless kinds of experience of bliss¹⁴⁷³
 Are that Lord's excellent kāya of great bliss.¹⁴⁷⁴
 As all assemblies are said to be collections,¹⁴⁷⁵
 Dharmakāya too is famed as being a collection.¹⁴⁷⁶

(d). **Divisions of Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya, by the Two Truths**

If you know the divisions of sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya according to the two truths, you will not be confused by the Sage's Word. It is common knowledge that the two form kāyas are relative sambhogakāya and relative nirmāṇakāya. Absolute sambhogakāya and absolute nirmāṇakāya¹⁴⁷⁷ are complete within perfectly established suchness. That is so, because suchness is the ultimate, absolute four kāyas, four vajras, four knowledges, four manifestations of enlightenment, four sattvas, four herukas, four consorts, the four syllables E VAṂ MA YĀ,¹⁴⁷⁸ four Kālacakras,¹⁴⁷⁹ four moments, four suchnesses, four signs, four Bhramā abodes,¹⁴⁸⁰ four liberations, four vajra yogas,¹⁴⁸¹ four kinds of individuals who are noble ones,¹⁴⁸² four noble truths, four schools,¹⁴⁸³ four vajra seats or realms, and so forth; and also because [four times four or] sixteen kinds of suchness are insight.

Since these points are very clear in [many] texts of profound, ultimate secret mantra, they are not confused. Though the presentation is unclear and confusing in some texts, the meaning is clearly just the same--perfectly established dharmatā, suchness.

Absolute sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya are well-known in the extraordinary style of mantra. If sugatagarbha were of the provisional meaning, the absolute four kāyas, and so forth, would also be of the provisional meaning. Sugatagarbha being something that is really other than suchness is not taught by the supreme noble ones, and we do not maintain it either. This truth is taught by many other names, but do not be confused by the names. Rely on the meaning.

(e). **How Absolute Truth Abides as the Four Kāyas of the Way**

Things Are

1'. The Brief Teaching

a'. Teaching of the Four Kāyas of the Way Things Are

Therefore, the four absolute kāyas of the ground of emptiness are the four kāyas of sugatagarbha, the essence of the inseparable ground and fruition. The *Pristine Wisdom Chapter* in *The Kālacakra Tantra* says:

The [solitary,] neutral level that is within neither the aspect of prajñā nor that of skillful means is the 1. innate or coemergent kāya. That becomes 2. dharmakāya, the nature of **primordially mixed** prajñā and skillful means. From the division of 'other' pristine wisdom and consciousness, this is **the ground that is** certainly free from the darkness¹⁴⁸⁴ of consciousness. It **abides as** the union of the **perceiver, prajñā, and the object, skillful means**. This **absolute is also** 3. the sambhogakāya **of dharmatā and also unconquerable innate sound** like an echo¹⁴⁸⁵ that is the performer of benefits for the sake of many sentient beings. Again, for the sake of ripening sentient beings, this **absolute** becomes 4. the nirmāṇakāya of the **absolute** buddhas.

Taught [in the *Kālacakra*] as the four kāyas of [absolute] pristine wisdom, these are also taught there as the four vajras:

1. The body vajra of the fundamental way things are that is the Victorious One, is not encountered in consciousness, **with its** dualistic **relationship of** object and perceiver. That is "**what is without aspects**, endowed with all aspects."
2. The speech vajra of the fundamental way things are, through **the unconquerable innate sound of** the Word in the heart **of each being**, makes [beings] understand the Dharma.
3. The vajra possessor's mind vajra is the **pervasive, luminous** nature of mind of sentient beings, abiding in all **that is animate and inanimate**.

What is like an immaculate jewel **that turns whatever it touches into a jewel as well**, is the apprehender **of the changeless bliss** of all actualities, the pristine wisdom vajra.

In itself, possessing the highest aspects,
The kāya that is seen by sentient beings,
In accord with the wishes of each one,
Is characterized as being nirmāṇakāya.

What illuminates with its miraculous nature,
By the power of wishes of sentient beings,
In all the languages of sentient beings,¹⁴⁸⁶
Is characterized as being sambhogakāya.

Neither permanent nor impermanent,

Characterized as neither one nor many,
Neither a real thing nor an unreal thing,¹⁴⁸⁷
Is dharmakāya that is without support.

Emptiness and compassion inseparable,¹⁴⁸⁸
Abandoning both desire and the desireless.¹⁴⁸⁹
Neither **the aspect of** prajñā nor skillful means,¹⁴⁹⁰
There is svābhavikakāya that is 'other.'¹⁴⁹¹

To that which is renowned as Kālacakra,
Peaceful, with the nature of four kāyas,
I prostrate with all [the bodies of] reality...

Also:

Homage to that non-dual **pristine wisdom**,
Though without characteristics of cause **and peace**,¹⁴⁹²
Without motion, and likewise without stages,¹⁴⁹³
Called **the stages of** the Wheel of Time.¹⁴⁹⁴

I bow my head to that Tathāgata,
Emanation of **four** syllables KA and so on,¹⁴⁹⁵
Perfect enjoyment, fine qualities,¹⁴⁹⁶ and purity¹⁴⁹⁷
Impartial first Buddha, taught to have four kāyas.

There, and so forth, the four kāyas of the ultimate definitive meaning that is perfectly established dharmatā, are taught. The compounded form kāyas cannot properly be said to be part of that ultimate definitive meaning.

b'. **Teaching that These Four Kāyas are Not [Relative] Form Kāyas**

The exalted Kalkī Puṇḍarīka says in the *Stainless Light*:

The blessed Buddha **of the fundamental way things are** is not the form kāyas, because he arises from space; because he is self-arising; because of having all aspects and having none; because of having the four drops;¹⁴⁹⁸ because of being without parts¹⁴⁹⁹ and beyond parts;¹⁵⁰⁰ because of holding the peak of the four joys;¹⁵⁰¹ because of being the primordial desireless that is the great desire;¹⁵⁰² because of not apprehending "mine"; because of not apprehending "me"; because all the constituents are inexhaustible; because of being the producer of all the realities of secret mantra; because of being the great drop without letters; because of being the five changeless topics of the great emptiness; because of being the six changeless, empty drops; and because of abiding in equality, like space;

These reasons also establish that [these four kāyas] transcend compounded, instantaneous phenomena, ephemeral powers, and interdependent arising. That the ultimate Buddha is not the [relative] form kāyas is taught in the Mother, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, and elsewhere, as is well-known.

2'. **The Extensive Explanation**a'. **How the Four, Sixteen, and So Forth, Kāyas of the Way Things Are Abide**

The *Stainless Light* says:

I prostrate to the omniscient, supreme, first, blessed buddha, **pristine wisdom** itself; having all aspects and having none, embraced by his blessed lady **Perfection of** Prajñā consort; possessing changeless bliss that abandons both birth and destruction;¹⁵⁰³ abandoning the unrestrained bliss **of mutual gazing, holding hands,** embracing, **and so forth**;¹⁵⁰⁴ Principal one, creator of all the buddhas, possessing the other three kāyas, purely and truly knowing the three times.

This passage says that perfectly established, changeless suchness is svābhavikakāya, the first buddha. Because that kāya has the one taste of inseparability with the remaining three kāyas, it is also the four [absolute] kāyas of dharmadhātu. *The Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

Though earlier and later are without distinction,¹⁵⁰⁵
Lacking all defilements of the two obscurations,
Suchness itself is what is maintained to be Buddhahood.
That suchness is not pure, and it is not impure.

The Sūtra of the Miraculous Meditative Absorption Ascertained as Total Peace, also known as the *Sūtra of the Meditative Absorption of the Four Youths* says:

What is not suchness is not the Tathāgata.

The Sublime Continuum differentiates:

Defiled suchness and that without defilement...

As taught there, and so forth, though suchness itself is without difference, those in whom it abides with defilements have only one of the two purities. [They have inherent purity of the nature, but not conditioned purity from incidental defilements.] Those in whom it abides without defilements have both. [When defilements have been purified from suchness, it manifests as the fruition.] That is, the same essence that abides for some as the essence of the ground abides in others as the essence of the fruition; and the same essence that abides for some as the essence of the fruition abides in others as the essence of the ground.

That single essence is called, “the inseparable essence of ground and fruition.” It is like the inseparable essence of space pervading all regions, whether clouds are present or not. That is the intention of teaching that

the essence is neither one-sidedly pure nor one-sidedly impure. Similarly, the glorious *Kālacakra* says regarding the four primordially liberated kāyas of dharmatā:

Omniscience and the pristine wisdom kāya, and the sunshine-producing kāya, and the blossoming lotus petal eye.

The *Stainless Light* comments:

I bow to that first buddha. Omniscience and the pristine wisdom kāya, are respectively the kāya of coemergence and the dharmakāya of the Victorious One. Sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya are called respectively the sunshine-producing kāya, and the blossoming lotus petal eye. These four are also the four pure vajra yogas; the four liberations; the three realms abiding in purity from saṃsāric existence; the four vajras of body, speech, mind and ‘other’ desire, or pristine wisdom; all of which are non-dual prajñā and skillful means, worthy of praise by gods, humans, and jealous gods.

Thus, in these words, “omniscience,” and so forth, the [Kālacakra] Tantra is teaching other names of the four kāyas, the kāya of coemergence, and so forth; the four yogas, the yoga of purity, and so forth; the four gates of liberation, emptiness, and so forth; and the four vajras, the body vajra, and so forth.

Their natures all have the one taste of suchness, but their mere names are different. Thus, [in essence,] they are all synonyms [of suchness.] They all abide as pristine wisdom in which prajñā and skillful means and saṃsāric existence and peace are inseparable, without contradiction. That state of existence is enlightenment of the [pure] three realms that is beyond all examples. Then the *Stainless Light* says:

Buddha seated on a lion throne, E on VAM, union of vajra yoga¹⁵⁰⁶ primordially, completely pure, worshipped by the three worlds.¹⁵⁰⁷ Solitary suchness, with sixteen aspects, by the divisions of kāya, abiding in existence without [saṃsāric] existence, ‘other’ knower and ‘other’ known primordially one, samaya¹⁵⁰⁸ of the supreme victorious one, its twelve limbs’, true meaning,¹⁵⁰⁹ enlightened mind, transformed into the conquerors’ vajras.¹⁵¹⁰ I prostrate to Kālacakra.

In solitary suchness, absolute great bliss abides inseparably within absolute great emptiness. That [union] abides as the four vajra yogas and the four kāyas that are the four vajras.

Each of the four kāyas eternally abides with [four] aspects of absolute body, speech, mind, and pristine wisdom, [multiplied by] the four joys. The ‘other’ knower is aware of these sixteen aspects, and the ‘other’ object possesses twelve true meanings. These, inseparably mixed into primordial

union, are **neutral**, absolute enlightened mind; the vajra abode of the victorious ones; and also the ‘other’ three realms transcending worldly example.

The *Stainless Light* comments regarding the [relationship of the] four yogas, [vajras, and gates of liberation:]

By¹⁵¹¹ **absolute** pristine wisdom, the pristine wisdom of emptiness,¹⁵¹² there is **the excellent yoga of** changeless purity. By **absolute** mind without characteristics, as pristine wisdom, there is **the excellent yoga of** purity of the non-dual nature of dharmas. As for **absolute** speech, by pristine wisdom¹⁵¹³ without aspiration, the pure, inexhaustible sounds of secret mantra **are the yoga of mantra**.

Likewise, **as for absolute** body, by the completely uncompounded, pristine wisdom¹⁵¹⁴ that is pure **and** undefiled, there is the yoga of shape, possessing miraculous travel.¹⁵¹⁵ **These four** have the nature of prajñā and means united.¹⁵¹⁶ Taught by the Tathāgata as vajrasattva, bodhisattva, mahāsattva, and samayasattva.¹⁵¹⁷

The previously taught absolute buddha, perfectly established dharmatā itself, without beginning and end, is peaceful enlightened mind.¹⁵¹⁸ This **is a third alternative, the middle that** has abandoned the two extremes of real things and unreal non-things, the absolute or ‘other’ principal deity.

Moreover, the pristine wisdom, mind, speech, and body of omnipresent dharmadhātu, [as apprehended] by pristine wisdom of the four gates of liberation,¹⁵¹⁹ are the primordially pure four yogas and four sattvas. All of these have the nature of prajñā and skillful means, primordially unified as one.

Elucidating the previously taught sixteen natures, the *Stainless Light* speaks about EVAM, [the non-dual union] which is mahāmudrā:

The body, speech and mind of emanation¹⁵²⁰
Are united and bound in a single wisdom.¹⁵²¹

The body, speech and mind of perfect enjoyment¹⁵²²
Are united and bound in a single wisdom.¹⁵²³

The body, speech and mind of glorious Dharma¹⁵²⁴
Are united and bound in a single wisdom.¹⁵²⁵

Coemergent body, speech, and mind¹⁵²⁶
Are united and bound in a single wisdom.¹⁵²⁷

Not [sexual] bliss arising from two organs
Of waking, dream, deep sleep, and the fourth,¹⁵²⁸

And purely and truly not abiding in the places
Of pristine wisdom, mind and speech and body,¹⁵²⁹

Completely putting aside the karma mudrā,¹⁵³⁰
Completely giving up the wisdom mudrā,¹⁵³¹

Purely and truly arising from mahāmudrā,
Innate and not accompanied by another.

Going beyond all conceptual meditation,
This is the changeless bliss of mahāmudrā.

Abandoning shape and [all of the] grasper and grasped,
As well as conceptual thought and verbal expression,

But having the form of a city of gandharvas,¹⁵³²
Or an image in mirror divination

Joining the natures of prajñā and skillful means.
To these syllables, E and VAM, I bow.

The sixteen natures of dharmatā, the fundamental nature of things, primordially and naturally transcend all relative, incidental phenomena. They are the innate pristine wisdom of the ground. [Insubstantial] like an image in mirror divination [and the other examples of illusion,] they are primordially free from conceptions of the four worldly occasions, the four [relative] drops, and [the conceptualized] visualization and recitation of meditation in the developing stage.

Since this wisdom is not causally related with other things, it has abandoned the [conditioned] karma and pristine wisdom mudrā consorts. It is the neutral level arising from mahāmudrā, where prajñā and skillful means are primordially and eternally joined. Called without faults of contradiction “the arising [in experience] of [the] non-arising, [eternal absolute,]” **this kind of [world-transcending] arising** is beyond worldly examples.

The fruition is an absolute, ‘other’ fruition of changeless, great bliss that is also the great compassion without reference point. It is empty of reference points of causes other than itself. Though it arises as mahāmudrā, it is not compounded, because mahāmudrā does not arise from any cause at all. With this intention the *Kālacakra Root Tantra* says:

Joint embrace [of opposites]¹⁵³³ that is peaceful,
Supreme androgynous level [that is neither],
As prajñā¹⁵³⁴ does not rise from any causes,
But rising from prajñā¹⁵³⁵ as cause is an effect;¹⁵³⁶
Since prajñā¹⁵³⁷ does not rise from any causes,
What rises from prajñā¹⁵³⁸ does not rise from causes.¹⁵³⁹
Therefore, since wisdom¹⁵⁴⁰ does not rise from causes,
Absolute prajñā is unsurpassed pristine wisdom.¹⁵⁴¹

The following sets of four have the same meaning as the ultimate, absolute four kāyas: the four knowledges of the profound fundamental way things are; the four herukas; the four manifestations of enlightenment; the four moments; the four suchnesses; and so forth.

Taught by various different names, they all are distinctions of the four kāyas within changeless, perfectly established suchness. They are not distinctions within non-erroneous, [conditioned] pristine wisdom of that pure and true reality that is rūpakāya, nor are they distinctions within dharmakāya and rūpakāya collectively.

b'. **How That [Way Things Are] Abides Pervading Everything as the Selfhood of the Five Kāyas and Five Pristine Wisdoms**

The selfhood of the absolute four kāyas, and that of the five kāyas and five pristine wisdoms as well, is inseparable from the essence. That is like space pervading a region whether clouds are there or not. Suchness always abides within all the sentient beings of the three realms and all the buddhas of the three times. It is well-established as the inseparable essence of both ground and fruition.

c'. **How That Way Things Are Abides as the Impartial Suchness That is Nirvāṇa**

The same venerable one, Kalkī Puṇḍarīka, says [in the *Stainless Light*:]

Regarding the partiality of naturelessness, the Blessed One teaches that [naturelessness] is impartial. Partialities like real things and unreal things; existence and non-existence; being or not being a possessor of a certain quality; one and not one; eternity and nothingness; saṃsāra and nirvāṇa; form and non-form; sound and non-sound; instantaneous and non-instantaneous; desire and non-desire; aversion and non-aversion; stupidity and non-stupidity, and so forth; are [conceptual] partialities, because they are mutually dependent.¹⁵⁴² The buddhas' nirvāṇa that does not dwell in extremes, the natureless ground, **is the center or middle that is free from these partial opposites, as a third alternative without contradiction.** Pristine wisdom, free from one moment or many, is taught as “suchness” by the victorious ones.

d'. **How That [Way Things Are] Also Abides as the Uncompounded Four and Sixteen Joys**

That [way things are,] by the power of the thoughts of sentient beings, appears as 1) the individual aspects [of the four joys of the truth of cessation] and 2) [the four joys of] the sixteen **natures**.

The divisions **of the first, the four** joys, are: 1) joy, 2) supreme joy, 3) special joy, and 4) innate joy.

Then, [within the second, the sixteen joys of the truth of cessation,] there are: 1) the joy, supreme joy, special joy, and innate joy of body; 2) the joy, supreme joy, special joy, and innate joy of speech; 3) the joy, supreme joy, special joy, and innate joy of mind; and 4) the joy, supreme joy, special joy, and innate joy of pristine wisdom.

The Blessed One teaches that a yogin who knows these sixteen natures [of the truth of cessation,] knows the sixteens aspects of suchness.

e'. **How That [Way Things Are] Also Abides as the Sixteen Divisions of Kāya**

That way things are, the suchness [of the absolute truth of cessation,] is also called “the [absolute] body that is the kāya of coemergence,” and after that dharmakāya, and after that **absolute** sambhogakāya, and after that **absolute** nirmāṇakāya.

Likewise, there are the body, speech, mind, and pristine wisdom of [the kāyas of] coemergence, Dharma,¹⁵⁴³ [absolute] perfect enjoyment, and [absolute] emanation. Thus, [the way things are] appears in sixteen aspects that are in accord with the excellent interests of the minds of all sentient beings.

f'. **How That [Way Things Are] Itself Also Abides as the Four Liberations, the Four Yogas, and So Forth**

That [way things are] of the **absolute truth of cessation** itself is called the “yoga of purity, kāya of coemergence, **primordial** purity through the [gate of] liberation of emptiness, the pristine wisdom vajra, and omniscience, with the nature of prajñā and skillful means.”

That [way things are] of the **absolute truth of cessation** itself is called the “yoga of the nature of phenomena, dharmakāya, **primordial** purity through the [gate of] liberation of marklessness, mind vajra, and the pristine wisdom kāya, with the nature of prajñā and skillful means.”

That [way things are] of the **absolute truth of cessation** itself is called “mantra yoga, sambhogakāya, **primordial** purity through the [gate of] liberation of wishlessness, speech vajra, and the sunshine producing kāya, with the nature of prajñā and skillful means.”

That [way things are] of the **absolute truth of cessation** itself is called “shape yoga, nirmāṇakāya, **primordial** purity through the [gate of] liberation of non-action, body vajra, and the blossoming lotus petal eye, with the nature of prajñā and skillful means.”

These four vajra yogas were related to the Buddha by Vajrapāṇi, [the lord of Secret.]

g'. **How That Itself Also Abides as Various Synonyms of the Four Kāyas, such as That of Omniscience, and as the Four Knowledges and Four Vajras**

Attainment of **primordial** complete purity through the [gate of] liberation of emptiness **of the truth of cessation**, the pristine wisdom vajra, with the nature of prajñā and skillful means, and the kāya of coemergence that is knowledge of all aspects is omniscience, because it sees all there is.

Attainment of **primordial** complete purity through the [gate of] liberation of marklessness **of the truth of cessation**, the mind vajra, with the nature of prajñā and skillful means, dharmakāya that is knowledge of aspects of the path, is the pristine wisdom kāya, because it has existence through supreme, changeless bliss.

Attainment of **primordial** complete purity through the [gate of] liberation of wishlessness **of the truth of cessation**, the speech vajra, with the nature of prajñā and skillful means, sambhogakāya that is knowledge of the path is the sunshine producing kāya, because it is the teacher of worldly and world-transcending Dharmas all together in the languages of limitlessly limitless sentient beings.

Attainment of **primordial** complete purity through the [gate of] liberation of non-action **of the truth of cessation**, the body vajra, with the nature of prajñā and skillful means, nirmāṇakāya that is knowledge of all aspects, is the blossoming lotus petal eye, because as limitlessly limitless nirmāṇakāyas, it emanates miracles that are displays of all aspects of the kāyas.

h'. **How That [Way Things Are] Itself Also Abides as the Four Manifestations of Enlightenment, and as the Four, Seeing All Meanings, and So Forth**

Similarly, instantaneous, true, complete enlightenment **of the absolute truth of cessation** is the pristine wisdom vajra, seeing all meanings, **pervading space**.

True, complete enlightenment by five aspects **of the absolute truth of cessation**, is the mind vajra, supreme, changeless bliss, **pervading space**.

True, complete enlightenment by twenty aspects **of the absolute truth of cessation**, is the speech vajra, the twelve true meanings, teaching the Dharma in all the languages of sentient beings.

True, complete enlightenment by the net of miracle **of the absolute truth of cessation**, is the body vajra, knowing the sixteen aspects, the kāya of proliferation through the limitless net of miracles.

Here, within omnipresent dharmadhātu, the essence of the inseparable ground and fruition, divisions four joys, sixteen natures, and so forth, of the absolute are taught by the names of their many aspects.

i'. **How All These Abide in the Four Chakras of the Body**

1''. **How All These Abide as Inexpressible Vowels and Consonants, and So Forth**

The noble one Vajragarbha says:

At the forehead of suchness are the vowels, āli, **of the absolute truth of cessation**.

At the throat of suchness are the consonants, kālī, of the absolute truth of cessation.

At the heart of suchness is prajñā of the absolute truth of cessation.

At the navel of suchness is skillful means of the absolute truth of cessation.

2". **How These Also Abide as the Changeless Four Kāyas of the Perfectly Established**

The kāya of coemergence is at the navel in the absolute truth of cessation. Dharmakāya is at the heart in the absolute truth of cessation. Sambhogakāya is at the throat in the absolute truth of cessation. Nirmāṇakāya is at the forehead in the absolute truth of cessation.

3". **How These Also Abide as Four Occasions That are the Four Absolute Occasions**

At the navel is the fourth occasion of the absolute truth of cessation, svābhavikakāya. At the heart is very deep sleep of the absolute truth of cessation, dharmakāya. At the throat is dreaming of the absolute truth of cessation, sambhogakāya. At the forehead is the waking state of the absolute truth of cessation, nirmāṇakāya.

4". **How These Also Abide as the Four Vajras of the Absolute Ground of Emptiness of Other**

At the forehead is the body vajra of the absolute truth of cessation. At the throat is the speech vajra of the absolute truth of cessation. At the heart is the mind vajra of the absolute truth of cessation. At the navel is the pristine wisdom vajra of the absolute truth of cessation.

5". **How These Also Abide as EVAM MAYĀ and the Four Consorts of Dharmakāya**

At the navel of the absolute truth of cessation is E, pure svābhavikakāya. At the heart of the absolute truth of cessation is VAM, pure dharmakāya. At the throat of the absolute truth of cessation is MA absolute, pure sambhogakāya. At the forehead of the absolute truth of cessation is YĀ, absolute, pure nirmāṇakāya.

At the navel of the absolute truth of cessation is Locanā, svābhavikakāya. At the heart of the absolute truth of cessation is Māmakī, dharmakāya. At the throat of the absolute truth of cessation is Pāṇḍaravāsini, absolute sambhogakāya. At the forehead of the absolute truth of cessation is Tārā, absolute nirmāṇakāya.

These are called "the four maṇḍalas of the absolute truth of cessation."

6". **How These Also Abide as Four 'Other' Instants without Example that are Instants of the Central Channel**

Regarding the four moments of the absolute truth of cessation, at the forehead are various aspects of the absolute truth of cessation, the *nirmāṇakāya* of reality. At the throat is ripening of the absolute truth of cessation, the absolute *sambhogakāya*. At the heart is [softening]¹⁵⁴⁵ of the absolute truth of cessation, *dharmakāya*. At the navel is freedom from [relative] characteristics of the absolute truth of cessation, *svābhavikakāya*.

7". **How These Also Abide as the Changeless Nature of ‘Other’ Joy, from the Four Joys**

At the forehead is joy of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute *nirmāṇakāya*. At the throat is supreme joy of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute *sambhogakāya*. At the heart is joy of joys of the absolute truth of cessation, *dharmakāya*. At the navel is innate joy of the absolute truth of cessation, *svābhavikakāya*.

8". **How These Also Abide as the ‘Other’ Four Truths that are the Four Truths of Dharmakāya**

At the forehead is the truth of suffering of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute *nirmāṇakāya*. At the throat is the truth of origin of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute *sambhogakāya*. At the heart is the truth of cessation of the absolute truth of cessation, *dharmakāya*. At the navel is the truth of the path of the absolute truth of cessation, *svābhavikakāya*.

9". **How These Also Abide as Four Suchnesses of the Way Things Are, Sugatagarbha**

At the forehead is the suchness of self of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute *nirmāṇakāya*. At the throat is the suchness of mantra of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute *sambhogakāya*. At the heart is the suchness of deities of the absolute truth of cessation, *dharmakāya*. At the navel is the suchness of pristine wisdom of the absolute truth of cessation, *svābhavikakāya*.

10". **How These Also Abide as the Four, Initiation of Sound, Expression of Sound, and So Forth**

At the forehead is the initiation of sound¹⁵⁴⁶ of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute *nirmāṇakāya*. At the throat is the expression of sound of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute *sambhogakāya*.¹⁵⁴⁷ At the heart is apprehending everything of the absolute truth of cessation, *dharmakāya*.¹⁵⁴⁸ At the navel is experiencing bliss of the absolute truth of cessation, *svābhavikakāya*.¹⁵⁴⁹

11". **How These Also Abide as Four Schools, with the Nature of ‘Other’ Schools**

At the navel is the Sthāvarīa school of the absolute truth of cessation, svābhavikakāya. At the heart is the Sarvāstivāda school of the absolute truth of cessation, dharmakāya. At the throat is the Saṃvidāya school of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute sambhogakāya. At the forehead is the Mahāsaṃghika school, of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute nirmāṇakāya.¹⁵⁵⁰

12". **How These Also Abide as the Sun, Moon, Rāhu, and Kālāgni of the Fundamental Nature**

At the forehead is the moon of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute nirmāṇakāya. At the throat is the sun of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute sambhogakāya. At the heart is Rāhu of the absolute truth of cessation, dharmakāya. At the navel is Kālāgni of the absolute truth of cessation, svābhavikakāya.¹⁵⁵¹

13". **How These Also Abide as Sixteen Transitions, and So Forth that are ‘Other’ Transitions Without Contradiction**

At the forehead are sixteen transitions of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute nirmāṇakāya. At the throat are thirty-two transitions of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute sambhogakāya. At the heart are eight transitions of the absolute truth of cessation, dharmakāya. At the navel are sixty-four transitions of the absolute truth of cessation, svābhavikakāya.

14". **How These Also Abide as the Four Sessions of ‘Other’ Natural Luminosity**

These are the also previously explained four [practice] sessions¹⁵⁵³ of the absolute truth of cessation.

At the forehead is the early session of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute nirmāṇakāya. At the throat is the noon session of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute sambhogakāya. At the heart is the late session of the absolute truth of cessation, dharmakāya. At the navel is the midnight session of the absolute truth of cessation, svābhavikakāya.

15". **How These Also Abide as Four Styles of Activity that are ‘Other’ Styles of Activity of the Innate Nature**

At the forehead is enjoyment of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute nirmāṇakāya. At the throat is predominance¹⁵⁵⁴ of the absolute truth of cessation, absolute sambhogakāya. At the heart is dissolving¹⁵⁵⁵ of the absolute truth of cessation, dharmakāya. At the navel is mastery,¹⁵⁵⁶ of the absolute truth of cessation, svābhavikakāya. Thus, there are all of the four synonyms of the absolute four kāyas.

16". **How These Also Abide as the [Thirty-Seven] Phenomena on the Side of Enlightenment**

The thirty-six phenomena on the side of enlightenment of the absolute truth of cessation, [the thirty seven,] excluding the all-pervading limb of enlightenment of pure and true equanimity, and the thirty-six constituents explained above, divided into four parts each, by the divisions of the [four] families of the absolute truth of cessation¹⁵⁵⁷ are inseparably joined with the four cakras [in enlightenment,] but abide separably with the four cakras of sentient beings.

17". **In Summarizing the Meaning of These, the Instruction that the Divisions of the Two Truths Must be Known**

Knowing the divisions of the two truths for the phenomena of the four occasions; the four truths; the four schools; the moon, the sun, Rāhu, and Kālāgni; the four sessions; the four styles of activity; and so forth, yogins should know that all these sets of four of the absolute occasions, and so forth, are taught to be so many divisions of the four kāyas of sugatagarbha in which ground and fruition are inseparable.

j'. **How These are Attained by Stopping the Continuity of the Winds in the Four Chakras**

Similarly, the subsequent *Kālacakra Tantra* says:

By **primordially** stopping the life-wind, [we become] two-armed Śiva¹⁵⁵⁸ Hevajra of the absolute truth of cessation, who is Vajrasattva overcoming pride. By **primordially** stopping the life-wind, [we become] four-armed fire god¹⁵⁵⁹ Hevajra of the absolute truth of cessation, as a bodhisattva overcoming anger. [We] become mahāsattva Hevajra, with three faces and six arms of the absolute truth of cessation, overcoming attached desire. [We become] eight-faced, sixteen-armed, four-legged Bhramā, a blissful samayasattva overcoming stupidity.

By **primordially** stopping the life-wind at the navel, that Vajrasattva, free from the three defilements, is buddhahood of the absolute truth of cessation. By **primordially** stopping the winds at the heart, that bodhisattva, a Pratyekabuddha of the absolute truth of cessation, free from the three defilements, is buddhahood. The sun at the throat becomes a mahāsattva great being of the absolute truth of cessation who is a Śrāvaka. By **primordially** stopping the power of wind at the forehead, as a blissful samayasattva of the truth of cessation free from the three defilements, one is a child of the Teacher.¹⁵⁶⁰

By knowing the divisions of the two truths of Śiva, the fire god [Agni], Bhramā, and so forth,¹⁵⁶¹ and Buddhas, Pratyekabuddhas, Śrāvakas, and buddha children, as many sets of four as are taught, like the four herukas that are the god Śiva, they should all be known to be synonyms of the four kāyas of the essence of the inseparable ground and fruition. They all abide inseparably with the absolute four cakras and separably with

the relative four cakras. However, if the winds are not stopped, they are not attained [experientially]. The same is true for the other sets of four extensively taught in the 500,000 stanza Kālacakra, like those cited above, in the section on the ground.

3'. **Summary**

Mañjuśrī's *Brief Explanation of the Assertions of our Own View*, quoted by the great paṇḍit Nāropa and master Acalagarbha, says:

The aggregations [composed] of limitless forms¹⁵⁶²
Are my excellent nirmāṇakāya.

The limitless heaps of [apprehended] sounds
Are my excellent sambhogakāya.

The limitless heaps of [apprehended] phenomena
Are proclaimed to be my dharmakāya.

The limitless heaps of [experiences of] bliss
Are my changeless kāya of [great] bliss.

Just as a heap is also a collection
Kāya is truly proclaimed to be a collection.

These too are taught as the four kāyas of the essence in which ground and fruition are inseparable. The meaning is the same as that of the sets of four taught above. All of these are distinctions within changeless, omnipresent dharmadhātu that is perfectly established suchness without anything [needing to be] added or cleared away. **This single kāya is taught in the *Sublime Continuum* to be formless eternity that is pervasive like space.** Its four space-like kāyas are taught by many aspects.

(f). **Teaching the Difference Between the Five Kayas and Six Families of Dharmatā being Obscured and Non-Obscured**

The suchness that is perfectly established dharmatā is taught to be the nature of five kāyas of buddhahood, absolute 1) nirmāṇakāya, 2) sambhogakāya, 3) dharmakāya, 5) pristine wisdom kāya, and 5) great bliss kāya.

Similarly, the victorious ones of the six families, their six consorts, and so forth, are thirty-six transformations [of their relative equivalents into thirty-six] absolute tastes and sense constituents, thirty-six ultimate skandhas, and so forth. These are taught as thirty six deities of pristine wisdom with the intention that [the corresponding relative categories] are [transformed into aspects of] perfectly established dharmatā.

If sugatagarbha were not real, they too would be unreal. Even so, from differences of clear and unclear presentation in the textual traditions, due to differences of understanding and not understanding these, there are differences of obscuration and non-obscuration for the single meaning that is taught. [As Tripiṭakamālā's *Lamp for the Three Modes* says:]

Though the meaning is one, [mantra treatises
Are better because they are not confused, have
many skillful means, and are without difficulties,
And are created for those with sharp faculties.]¹⁵⁶³

This is like the difference between viewing high mountain [panoramically],
from high in the space above it, and viewing [only partially], from a plain
below it.

(2). **Explaining Wonderful, Perfect Pristine Wisdom**

(a). **Brief Teaching of Self-Arisen and Other-Arisen Pristine Wisdom**

The absolute Buddha is the kāya of the five self-arising pristine wisdoms.
Suchness and the changeless, perfectly established always abide as these
five pristine wisdoms. The relative form kāyas realize the [same] perfectly
established [nature] realized by non-erroneous, [absolute] pristine wisdom
of the pure and true, but their [relative] pristine wisdom [of the path]
of no more learning¹⁵⁶⁴ of the Great Vehicle does not transcend the
instantaneous.

(b). **Extensive Explanation Distinguishing Self-Arisen and Other-Arisen Pristine Wisdom**

1'. **Explanation of Other-Arisen Pristine Wisdom and Its Causes**

Maitreya's *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras* says:

The mirror-like pristine wisdom is [completely] motionless.
The **other** three pristine wisdoms [all] depend on it:
Equality, discrimination, and accomplishing.

The mirror-like pristine wisdom is without a "mine."
Its **sphere** is unlimited, and it is always possessed.¹⁵⁶⁵
It is not unreflective¹⁵⁶⁶ of any phenomena,¹⁵⁶⁷
And it is always complete free from separate objects.¹⁵⁶⁸

Because it is the principle¹⁵⁶⁹ of all the pristine wisdoms
It is like the great source of [all the] pristine wisdoms.
Also [called] the complete enjoyment of buddhahood,¹⁵⁷⁰
Because it is the source of [all the] reflections of wisdom.¹⁵⁷¹

Equality pristine wisdom is said **to be attained**¹⁵⁷²
In sentient beings who have meditated [well].
Entering into the peace,¹⁵⁷³ of not dwelling [anywhere,]¹⁵⁷⁴
It is maintained as the wisdom of equality.

Possessing at all times lovingkindness [for all,]
And the great compassion, **as is widely famed**,
In accord with the interests of **all** sentient beings,
It is **taught to** display [all kinds of] buddha kāyas.

The pristine wisdom of discriminating awareness

Is unobstructed toward [all kinds of] objects of knowledge.¹⁵⁷⁵
 It is exactly like a precious treasury
 Of meditative absorptions and dhāraṇīs of practice.

To the circle of those within the retinue.
 Displaying all the different kinds of wealth,
 Cutting off [all kinds of] hesitations and doubt,
 It produces the falling of the great rain of holy Dharma,

The pristine wisdom performing all-accomplishing action
 Accomplishes in all of the various, different world realms,
 By various kinds of inconceivable emanations,
 All of the goals [that are wished for by] beings, without remainder.

These emanations of buddhahood are to be known
 As always accomplishing particular kinds of action.
 In **terms of** number, fields, and different kinds,
 Their actions should be known to be inconceivable.

The four pristine wisdoms [arising from other] taught there are non-erroneous, perfectly established [phenomena] of the compounded relative, included within the truth of the path. That true and pure pristine wisdom is [the fourth] of the five topics.

From what causes do these four pristine wisdoms arise? The *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

These four-fold pristine wisdoms arise respectively
 Due to apprehension,¹⁵⁷⁶ because of equal mind,¹⁵⁷⁷
 Because of teaching the dharma of the pure and true,¹⁵⁷⁸
 And due to accomplishing actions of happiness and benefit.¹⁵⁷⁹

Intending [that they are aspects of] these four pristine wisdoms of the buddhas' form kāyas, texts like the Extensive and Medium Length Mother teach that the ten powers, four fearlessnesses, individual correct realizations, and so forth, of a tathāgata, up to the eighteen unshared qualities of buddhahood, are compounded.

2'. **The Explanation of Self-Arisen Pristine Wisdom Without Causes and Conditions**

a'. **How 'Other' Skandhas that are Naturally World-Transcending Skandhas Abide as the Five Pristine Wisdoms**

The profound pristine wisdoms of the tantras are absolute, uncompounded, changeless, perfectly established phenomena. Within the five topics, they are [included in] suchness. The *Chapter on Establishment of Supreme Changeless Pristine Wisdom* [in the *Stainless Light*] says:

As taught by the Tathāgata in Expressing the names of Mañjuśrī, the blessed one Vajradhara is the supreme, changeless essence [taught] in the styles of 1) the Śrāvakas [of the Lesser Vehicle], 2) the perfections [of the Great Vehicle], and 3) the mantra vehicle.

In future time, improper gurus will arise who have degenerated from the view of the pure and true. Falling away from supreme, changeless bliss, they will not know the reality of this. When they have fallen away **from the view, meditation, and action themselves**, they will cause [other] sentient beings to fall away **from the path of liberation** as well.

In the [Kālacakra] Root Tantra, the Blessed One praises cultivation of **the essence of** the five aspects of pristine wisdom in five stanzas.

1. In the **primordially and naturally** world-transcending truth **of the absolute truth of cessation**, the ‘other’ form skandha is the mirror-like pristine wisdom:

Real things, as a collection abiding in emptiness,
Having abandoned imputed forms,¹⁵⁸⁰ are immaterial.
They are like the images within a mirror,
Seen by a young maiden performing divination.

2. The ‘other’ skandha of feelings is the pristine wisdom of equality.
In dharmakāya:

When all real things¹⁵⁸¹ become equality,
Abiding as a single, changeless, reality,
Or real essence that arises from pristine wisdom,
They are not without nothingness,¹⁵⁸² and they are not
permanent.¹⁵⁸³

3. The ‘other’ skandha of conditioned perceptions becomes the pristine wisdom of discriminating awareness. **In the absolute:**

All of the [different] letters, having the nature of names,
Purely and truly arise from the syllable A.¹⁵⁸⁴
Having¹⁵⁸⁵ attained the manner of the great changelessness,
Even those with the name of the nameless¹⁵⁸⁶ are non-
existent.¹⁵⁸⁷

4. The ‘other’ skandha of conditioned perceptions becomes the pristine wisdom of persevering action.¹⁵⁸⁸ **In the absolute:**

Phenomena have never arisen **from cause and conditions**.¹⁵⁸⁹
In the ground that is free from **relative** formations,
There is no **relative** buddhahood, and there is no **such**
enlightenment.
There are no sentient beings, and there are no living
beings.¹⁵⁹⁰

5. The ‘other’ skandha of consciousness becomes the completely pure pristine wisdom of dharmadhātu.

Transcending the nature of [relative] consciousness,
Phenomena in their natural luminosity¹⁵⁹¹
Of pure self-risen wisdom without coverings¹⁵⁹²
Abide in the course of experience of dharmadhātu.

b'. **How ‘Other’ Forms, Great Forms, and So Forth, Abide as Victorious Ones**

The *Abbreviated Kālacakra* (v.101-103), teaches the symbolism of the wheel and [other family symbols] of the absolute truth of cessation, as well as the characteristics of the skandhas of the Tathāgata of the absolute truth of cessation:¹⁵⁹³

The wheel is ‘other’ or absolute form that is “completely clear” of the three realms. Absolute bliss of the truth of cessation is a jewel. That is ‘other’ feeling. The pure desire of this absolute truth of cessation is a lotus.

That is ‘other’ or absolute conceptualized perception. Exhausting afflictive emotions is a sword. That is ‘other’ or absolute conditioned formations. A vajra is the indestructible wisdom kāya. That is ‘other’ or absolute dualistic consciousness.

Cutting through ignorance is a hooked knife that is the ‘other’ pristine wisdom skandha. The supreme victorious ones of the six families are what is created by these six symbolic scepters. (v.101)

The skandhas, sense constituents, sense powers, and so forth, [the sense objects, action powers, and action objects] of the absolute truth of cessation, of equal taste, like space, as thirty-six deities, should be known to be like those six symbols [of the six families] and the six victorious ones that are symbolized.

Aside from that, certainly the form of the families that has deteriorated¹⁵⁹⁴ primordially and naturally [from its relative limitations] is taught to be form that is the fifth topic of the great emptiness.

Aside from that, the ground of the suffering of saṃsāra that has deteriorated primordially and naturally is called the great feeling, the third topic of the changeless, great emptiness.

Aside from that, the ground of the conceptualized perception of saṃsāra that has deteriorated primordially and naturally is only vajra conceptualized perception,¹⁵⁹⁵ the fourth topic of the changeless, great emptiness. (V.102)

Aside from that, the ground of the increase of saṃsāra that has deteriorated primordially and naturally¹⁵⁹⁶ is only vajra formations, the second topic of the changeless, great emptiness.

Aside from that, the ground of the four occasions of sleep, and so forth that have deteriorated is taught as vajra consciousness,¹⁵⁹⁷ the first topic of the changeless, great emptiness.

Aside from that, the things of what is not knowledge, ignorance, that have primordially and naturally deteriorated,¹⁵⁹⁸ is the Sage’s pristine wisdom itself. That is also the first topic of the changeless,

great emptiness. (V.103)

These six are Vairocana, and so forth, the six supreme absolute victorious ones of the six families.

- c'. **How the 'Other' Elements Abide as Female Sugatas that are the Sense Constituents of the Fundamental Nature of Things, Dharmatā**

Also, it says there:

The others from those above, the six consorts, are the divisions of the six elements of the absolute truth of cessation, earth, water, fire, wind, space, and peaceful pristine wisdom.

- d'. **How the Expression of the Absolute Names of Mañjuśrī Extensively Teaches the Five Self-Arising Pristine Wisdoms**

Similarly, it is said in the *Expression of the Absolute names of Mañjuśrī*, the Tathāgata teaches the supreme, changeless pristine wisdom of a vajra holder that is the essence of buddhas and bodhisattvas for 162 stanzas with accompanying supplications.

- e'. **How the Five Syllables of the Great Emptiness Clearly Teach the Five Self-Arising Pristine Wisdoms**

The glorious *Abridged Kālacakra* also says, [praising the five wisdoms as the five topics of the great emptiness:]

That topic of the fundamental nature of how things are, without beginning, middle, and end, is also free from death, existence, sound, smell, taste, touchables, form, and mind, the twenty-four natures, and the person, the twenty-fifth, and has no bondage, liberation, nor any doer. It has no seeds¹⁵⁹⁹ and no clearly restricted time of the three times,¹⁶⁰⁰ so that it is the ground without the natures of all the [moments of] suffering and happiness¹⁶⁰¹ of saṃsāra.

Great nirvāṇa, without [dualistic] characteristics, completely free from production, without the eight qualities of the [relative] sun and moon,¹⁶⁰² but possessing the immeasurable qualities of dharmakāya, I prostrate to that first changeless, great emptiness, [transforming consciousness as the] dharmadhātu pristine wisdom.

Time, Kālacakra, and the variety consort Viśvamātā, and so forth, vajras with many names and attributes, and the absolute person of the truth of cessation, omnipresent, having no [relative] example and [relative] proliferation, everlasting abiding with all of the ears, nose, mouth, eyes, head, arms, and legs,¹⁶⁰³ ultimate of ultimately abiding elements, lord of the elements, apprehending the supreme three realms, ground that is the [absolute] cause of [all the relative] causes of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, what is realized by the yogas of 'other,' inner, changeless knowledge, the perfection of prajñā, and

so forth, has many names; but it is not within the realm of reasoning. I prostrate to the level of supreme bliss, Kālacakra, the second changeless, great emptiness, transforming formations as the all-accomplishing pristine wisdom.

With power,¹⁶⁰⁴ the śāktis, powerful ladies emanating the assembly of pristine wisdom deities, as the twelve true meanings, the form of the three realms, like fiery lightning, possessing the brilliant shining of twelve vajra suns, I prostrate to the level of traversing the supreme appearance of the pristine wisdom vajra, the visārga [drawn to symbolize] the third changeless, great emptiness, [transforming feelings as] the pristine wisdom of equality.

The white drop emitted from the rabbit-depicting moon, [drawn to symbolize] the lord of the three worlds, dwelling at the crown of all the worlds, the nature of amṛita clearing away death, overcoming the fears of saṃsāric existence, I prostrate to that form of a drop, the fourth changeless, great emptiness, [transforming conceptualized perceptions into] the pristine wisdom of discriminating awareness.

Mind-only [beyond concept] of the absolute truth of cessation, the essence of mantra of the absolute truth of cessation, surrounded by deities of the absolute truth of cessation, the nature of bliss and suffering,¹⁶⁰⁵ though he¹⁶⁰⁶ is without near and far, he appears for holy ones as peaceful forms, produced by themselves in accord with their own karma.¹⁶⁰⁷ Their experiences of these inexhaustible appearances, likewise,¹⁶⁰⁸ are inexhaustible, ground that is the producer of effects of karma through individuals, produced in accord with whatever their karma may [pray for,] according to the liturgies of their own minds, the Lord of the World, possessing various forms, producer of the 'other' three realms, I prostrate to Vajrasattva, the fifth changeless, great emptiness, [transforming forms into] mirror-like pristine wisdom.

f. **Teaching How the Six Changeless, Empty Drops are Inseparable From Those**

That in which one and many are one, and equal and unequal are equal, as are right, left, front, back, above and below, white, green, all the great various colors are one, form, short and long and very long,¹⁶⁰⁹ qualities without quality,¹⁶¹⁰ not woman, not man;¹⁶¹¹ but not without woman and man.¹⁶¹² That which is the one support of all, excellent bhaga, bhaga that is supreme, to you I bow, to you I bow.

That is about the five points of the vajra that are the essences of the five self-arisen pristine wisdoms, as well as the [single] lotus or bhaga that is their support. They are the changeless five of the great emptiness and, [with the bhaga,] the six changeless, empty drops.

g'. **How These Also Abide in the Maṇḍala Circles, and So Forth**

Form abiding in coemergent suchness
Is the yoginī of excellent great bliss.
That is the circle of the maṇḍala,
Having the nature of the five pristine wisdoms.

That is the form of the mirror-like pristine wisdom,
With the reality of the pristine wisdoms
of equality and correct discrimination;
And also, that of persevering activity.

The total purity of dharmadhātu,
That is the master of the maṇḍala,
That is also the selfless yoginī
Who possesses the nature of dharmadhātu.

There it says that suchness, the changeless, [purity of the] perfectly established nature, [blossoms as] the vast, great maṇḍala of great bliss. That is also taught to be the self-arising, uncompounded five pristine wisdoms.

(c). **How the Particulars of These are in Accord with the Teachings**1'. **Teaching That, as with the Buddha, for the Five Pristine Wisdoms, It is Necessary to Know the Divisions of the Two Truths**

Just as it is necessary to know the divisions of the two truths regarding the Buddha, if you know the divisions of the two truths regarding the Buddha's pristine wisdoms, you will not be confused about the Buddha's word. The *Buddha Level Sūtra* says:

[The Buddha] spoke to the bodhisattva Very Collected saying, Very Collected, the Buddha level is a collection of five phenomena. What are these five? Completely pure **suchness that is** dharmadhātu,¹⁶¹³ **and the four pristine wisdoms**, the mirror-like pristine wisdom, the pristine wisdom of equality, discriminating pristine wisdom, and the pristine wisdom of accomplishing action.

The Buddha spoke that Word, together with extensive explanations of each phenomenon. The four pristine wisdoms have the same meaning as they do in the delineation of them in texts like the *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle*. Completely pure dharmadhātu is self-arising pristine wisdom itself, as elucidated in the profound tantras; thus, it is the absolute five wisdoms, as well as the absolute five skandhas and five elements. As the noble one Vajragarbha says:

The mirror and equality wisdoms,
And discriminating, the third,
And the others, accomplishing action

And completely pure dharmadhātu,
 Forms, feelings, and perceptions,
 Conditioned formations, and consciousness;¹⁶¹⁴
 And earth with water and fire,
 Wind, and the empty fifth,¹⁶¹⁵
 Are five pure wisdoms and five,
 Enlightened manifestations,
 With the nature of ten pure awarenesses,¹⁶¹⁶
 Holding ten pure kinds of consciousness.¹⁶¹⁷

Tripiṭakamālā says:

Though the meaning is one, [Mantra treatises
 Are better because they are not confused, have
 many skillful means, and are without difficulties,
 And are created for those with sharp faculties.]¹⁶¹⁸

If you understand that the five self-arising pristine wisdoms are dharmadhātu itself, you will not be confused [by the Sage's Word;] but if you do not understand that, you will be. Though [the] differences [explained above] exist [between the sūtras and tantras,] the [ultimate] meaning is just the same. That is because the five pristine wisdoms [of the sūtras] and the five-pointed vajra whose points have the meanings of the five [topics of] the great emptiness elucidated in the profound tantras, are both the same within dharmadhātu. That is taught in all the profound sūtras and tantras alike.

2'. **Teaching That These Pristine Wisdoms That are Included Within the Two Truths, Have the Same Meaning as the Two Perfectly Established Natures**

Similarly, as taught regarding the perfectly established nature, from the three natures: 1) the changeless, uncompounded, perfectly established nature has the same meaning as the five [absolute] self-arising pristine wisdoms elucidated in profound secret mantra; and 2) the non-erroneous, perfectly established nature has the same meaning as the four [relative] pristine wisdoms of dharmadhātu delineated in the *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras*.

3'. **How These Pristine Wisdoms Also Abide as the Meaning of "Suchness" and as Pristine Wisdom of the Pure and true**

Similarly, from the five dharmas or topics of the Great Vehicle: 1) name, 2) characteristics or reasons, 3) conceptions, 4) suchness, and 5) pristine wisdom of the pure and true; **and from the reality of the five dharmas, three natures, and eight consciousnesses in the Great Vehicle all together:** 1) suchness is equivalent to the five [absolute] pristine wisdoms taught in secret mantra; and 2) pristine wisdom of the pure and true has the same meaning as the four [relative] pristine wisdoms taught in the Buddha

Level Sūtra and elsewhere. These are respectively 1) the pristine wisdoms of uncompounded, absolute dharmakāya and 2) the pristine wisdoms of compounded relative form kāyas.

4'. **Teaching That, Therefore, Buddhahood is Endowed with Nine or Fourteen Pristine Wisdoms, within the Two Truths**

The pristine wisdom of completely pure dharmadhātu is always absolute, but the other four, the mirror-like pristine wisdom, and so forth, may be either compounded or uncompounded. It should be known that they may be either relative or absolute.

Multiplied by the two truths, [those two sets of four other-arisen pristine wisdoms] are eight. With eight other-arising pristine wisdoms and one self-arising pristine wisdom there are nine [in total.]

The five self-arising pristine wisdoms, with divisions of prajñā and skillful means, are taught to be ten awarenesses, or pristine wisdoms, of the way things are. When the four compounded pristine wisdoms are added, there are fourteen pristine wisdoms included within the two truths.

If sugatagarbha did not really exist, suchness, the changeless five [topics] of the great emptiness, and so forth, would not exist either, because all these are equivalent.

(3). **The Explanation of the Extremely Wonderful, Perfect Qualities**

(a). **The Actual Explanation of How the Buddha Qualities are Included Within the Two Truths**

1'. **The Qualities of Absolute Dharmakāya**

It is taught in the *Sublime Continuum* and elsewhere, that the kāya that is the absolute itself is complete with thirty-two qualities of the absolute truth of cessation. These consist of the ten powers, four fearlessnesses, and eighteen unshared phenomena of buddhahood. That is just a summary of the principal qualities. The extensive teaching, in the *Stainless Light*, and so forth, says that there are ‘eighty-four thousand heaps of absolute phenomena.’ The *Śrīmāla-devī Sūtra* and others speak of “inconceivable phenomena of qualities transcending in number the grains of sand of the river Ganges.” The *Aṅgulimāla Sūtra* and others teach “the dhātu of buddhahood adorned with limitless qualities like the excellent major and minor marks.” Some of these passages were cited previously.

The victorious Maitreya teaches both the intrinsic qualities of [absolute] dharmatā, svābhavikakāya, and the attained qualities [of relative buddhahood] in the *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle*:

The kāya of the nature¹⁶¹⁹ is said to be the cause
Bestowing all the abundant wealth of perfect enjoyment,¹⁶²⁰

Showing how its many enjoyments may be enjoyed,
[Through] equality,¹⁶²¹ subtlety,¹⁶²² and being related with that.¹⁶²³

Also, he says in the *Ornament of Clear Realization*:

As for the Sage's kāya of the essence,¹⁶²⁴
There are 1. the undefiled phenomena¹⁶²⁵
That it has attained, 2. their being completely pure,¹⁶²⁶
And 3. characteristics [intrinsic to]¹⁶²⁷ the nature itself.

[The twenty-one intrinsic qualities of dharmakāya are the following:]

1) the thirty-seven factors conducive to enlightenment; 2) the four immeasurables; and 3) the eight liberations; 4) the nature of nine successive meditative absorption; 5) and the nature of the ten exhaustive totalities; 6) the eight divisions of overcoming constituents; 7) lack of afflictions; and 8) knowledge rising from aspirations; 9) the higher perceptions, 10) the four true apprehensions; 11) four kinds of purification; 12) ten masteries; and 13) ten powers; 14) the four kinds of fearlessnesses; and 15) the three kinds of non-guarding; as well as 16) the threefold objects of mindful establishment; 17) the nature of non-forgetting; 18) truly conquering predispositions; 19) and the great compassion for all sentient beings; 20) the exclusive attributes possessed by only the Sage of which there are eighteen divisions that have been set forth; together with 21) all-pervading omniscient knowledge itself. This is the way that dharmakāya has been described.¹⁶²⁸

[Regarding the six higher perceptions, the *Pristine Wisdom Chapter* in the *Kālacakra Tantra* says:]

From the power of the body¹⁶²⁹ of the principal deity, the excellent bodies of yogins come to have the divine eye; From the power of his speech, the **divine ear**; from **the power of the principal one's** mind, they know **through higher perception** what abides in the hearts of others.

From the power of the body of the prajñā **consort**, they remember many former births, in places of the three realms. From the power of the speech of the prajñā **consort**, they come to manifest miracles to the limits of space at all times. From the nature of mind of the prajñā **consort**, bliss equal at all [places and] times becomes unconquerable, **as the higher perception that exhausts all defilements**.

From the power of the divine eye, they see what the **ordinary** eye does not see, and they also see the three realms of existence. From the power of the divine ear, they hear what is expressed by the mouths of **all** living beings, **near or far**, and hear their words in their **absolute, ultimate** hearts.

Likewise, from applications of body, speech, and mind, Lord of Humans,¹⁶³⁰ they have **higher perception of** all touchables, and so

forth....

Also, the *Compendium of Pure and True Dharma Sūtra* says:

What is the Buddha of the essence of the absolute truth of cessation? The Buddha of the essence is the transformer of receiving bad states, inconceivable, undefiled, the possessor of various forms of the absolute truth of cessation, the one taste of the essence of the different aspects of dharmadhātu, the possessor of various forms, proportions, and shapes of the absolute truth of cessation, appearing to pristine wisdom in the form of a buddha possessing the thirty-two major marks of a great being of the absolute truth of cessation. Such is the Buddha of the essence....

These texts and others say that, within dharmatā, all the qualities of dharmakāya are primordially and naturally self-existent., these Inseparably complete qualities never go beyond absolute truth.

2'. The Qualities of the Conventional Form Kāyas

When it is said in the *Sublime Continuum* and elsewhere, “the qualities of the ripened relative form kāyas are the thirty-two major marks,” that is just an abbreviation of the principal ones. Many more qualities are taught in extensive accounts, like the eighty minor marks, and the eighty design markings [listed below.] Also, the *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras* says:

In all world realms sambhogakāya differs
by pure assembled retinue,¹⁶³¹ field,¹⁶³² and name,¹⁶³³
Body,¹⁶³⁴ complete enjoyment of dharmas,
And activities....¹⁶³⁵

The *Ornament of Clear Realization* says, [describing the major marks:]

This body that is replete with the nature
of thirty-two major and eighty minor marks,
Because of complete enjoyment of the Great Vehicle,
Is called the Sage's body of perfect enjoyment.¹⁶³⁶

1. The hands and feet marked by wheels,¹⁶³⁷ and 2. tortoise feet.¹⁶³⁸
3. With fingers and toes that are connected by webs.¹⁶³⁹
4. The hands and feet have flesh that is soft and youthful,
5. Seven parts of the body are elevated.¹⁶⁴⁰
6. Long fingers, 7. broad heels, and 8. a large straight body.¹⁶⁴¹
9. Inconspicuous ankle bones, 10. Body hairs sticking up.¹⁶⁴²
11. Calves like the antelope eneya.¹⁶⁴³ 12. Long and handsome arms.¹⁶⁴⁴
13. The excellent secret organ retracted in a sheath.¹⁶⁴⁵
14. Skin that is gold in color, and 15. Skin that is very soft.
16. Every well-grown¹⁶⁴⁶ body hair coiling to the right.
17. A hair-treasure on the face.¹⁶⁴⁷ 18. A lion-like upper body.¹⁶⁴⁸

19. Rounded shoulders and 20. shoulders that are broad.
 21. Tastes that are unpleasant appearing as excellent.
 22. A body with a circumference like a nyagrodha tree.
 23. A prominent crown protrusion¹⁶⁴⁹ and 24. a long and handsome tongue
 25. A voice like Bhramā¹⁶⁵⁰ and 26. Lion-like cheeks
 Excellent teeth, 27. very white, 28. Equal in size, and 29. even.
 30. And which are complete as fully forty in number.
 31. Dark blue eyes, and 32. Eyelashes like a bull.¹⁶⁵¹
 These are the thirty-two major marks [that are present in a great being.]

Also, [regarding the minor marks:]

The Sage's nails are (1) coppery,
 (2) glossy, and (3) highly arched;
 The fingers (4) round, (5) full and (6) small - jointed.

(7) the veins are free from knots
 (8) and inconspicuous.
 (9) the ankles are inconspicuous.
 (10) the feet have no disproportion.

He walks with a manner like
 (11) a lion or (12) elephant,
 (13) a bird¹⁶⁵² or (14) a herd - leading bull.
 (15) he circles to the right.

(16) he goes gracefully and (17) directly,
 (18) and in his chosen body,
 (19) as if polished, and (20) well arranged,

With body (21) clean, (22) smooth and (23) pure.
 (24) the sexual organs complete,
 (25) the body is ample and strong,
 (26) and walks with even paces.

(27) his two eyes are pure.
 (28) also, he is youthful.
 (29) the body, not wasted away,¹⁶⁵³
 (30) has blossoming health and (31) firmness.

(32) the limbs are well - defined,
 (33) the sight unobscured and true,
 (34) the waist round and (35) well proportioned,¹⁶⁵⁴

(36) small and not stretched out,
 (37) the belly being flat.

(38) the navel deep (39) and right coiling.
 (40) if looked at from all sides,
 The form is very attractive,

(41) his conduct is pure (42) and his body

Unblemished by moles and freckles.

(43) the hands, soft like cotton wool,
(44) have lustrous, (45) deep (46) long lines.

(47) the face is not too long.
(48) the lips red like bimpa fruit.¹⁶⁵⁵
(49) the tongue soft, (50) thin and (51) red,
(52) with an awesome voice like thunder;
(53) but the speech is soft and gentle.

(54) the canines are round and (55) sharp,
(56) white, (57) equal and (58) well - arranged.
(59) the nose tall and (60) very clean.

(61) the eyes are wide (62) with thick lashes.
(63) they are like lotus petals.
(64) the eyebrows are long and (65) soft,
(66) glossy (67) with equal hairs.

(68) the hands are big and long,
(69) the ears are equal [in length].¹⁶⁵⁶
(70) the hearing is without faults.

(71) the forehead is well - defined,¹⁶⁵⁷
And (72) broad, and (73) the head is big.
(74) the hair is black like a bee,
(75) thick, and (76) soft, and (77) not bristly,
(78) not rough, and (79) very good smelling.

He ravishes people's minds.
(80) with glorious knots of eternity,
Auspiciously adorned
With whirling swastikas.
That explains the buddhas'
Excellent minor marks.¹⁶⁵⁸

[As for the eighty design markings, the *Sūtra of the Questions of Mañjuśrī* says:]

The eighty design markings on a Tathāgata's palms and soles of the feet are as follows: parasol, victory banner, knot of eternity, māla, hook, crown, staff, vase, elephant, horse, tiger, crocodile, fish, turtle, peacock, kalapingka bird,¹⁶⁵⁹ pheasant, tsā sha,¹⁶⁶⁰ duck, parrot, swan, thi ba,¹⁶⁶¹ barley, great medicine, bamboo, gayal,¹⁶⁶² nāga, goat, herd-leading bull, wood apple, tree, black deer, precious jewel, supreme sword, vajra, bow, arrow, short spear,¹⁶⁶³ trident, plow, pestle, axe, noose, pearl ornament, cloud, bhramā, indra, yul 'khor srung,¹⁶⁶⁴ varuṇa, the sea god, virudhaka, virupakṣa,¹⁶⁶⁵ kuvera, great sage, śrī, glorious, sun, moon, fire, wind, lotus, swastika, triangle, good seat, mirror, yak tail fan, durva grass,¹⁶⁶⁶ purodaśa, boy, girl, drum, conch, mṛi tang ga, round drum, bracelet, arm band, ear-ring, finger ring, ear-pendant, excellent flower, wish-

granting tree, lion on a wheel-hub.

There are many other teachings of particular Buddha qualities that I have not written down here. Regarding relative *nirmāṇakāyas*, the *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

Numberless emanations of buddhahood.¹⁶⁶⁷
 Are described as being *nirmāṇakāyas*.
 Natural perfection of the two benefits
 Abides in the two possessors of all aspects.¹⁶⁶⁸
 Created,¹⁶⁶⁹ born,¹⁶⁷⁰ and perfectly enlightened,¹⁶⁷¹
 These [various] emanations of buddhahood,
 By always being teachers of *nirvāṇa*
 Are great skillful means of liberation.

Also, the *Ornament of Clear Realization* says:

These bodies equally doing
 Beings' various benefits
 As long as *saṃsāra* lasts,
 Are the Sage's *nirmāṇakāyas*.

(b). **Teachings Unfolding Distinctions Within the Profound Intention, Through Questions and Answers**

1'. **Explaining the Significance of Buddhahood Being Inconceivable and Absence of Assertions**

Question: Is the Buddha one or many?

Answer: Not one and not many.

Question: What is the [specific] intention of that?

Answer: [The Buddha's] form *kāyas* are not one, because very many [instantaneous apprehensions of] later [such] bodies are experienced, following after former ones.

[The Buddha's] *dharmakāya* is not many, because it is not a body compounded [from many phenomena,] and because it has the one taste of *dharmadhātu*. The *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* of the Great *Madhyamaka* says:

Because within the undefiled *dhātu*,¹⁶⁷³
 the buddhas have no [relative, physical] bodies,¹⁶⁷⁴
 And as later bodies follow the former,¹⁶⁷⁵
 The buddhas are not one, and also are not many.¹⁶⁷⁶

The intention [for practice] of teaching “the buddhas are not said and proclaimed to be one or many” is 1) being without speech, thought, and expression on the occasion of passing the pass into the formless meditation of the noble ones, and 2) [saying] just what [is said in the above passage] on the occasion of making distinctions within subsequent attainment.

Objection: When you say, “The Buddha exists,” you fall into the extreme of existence; and when you say “The Buddha does not exist,” you fall into the extreme of non-existence.

Answer: There is no fault, because we say neither that the Buddha exists nor that the Buddha does not exist.

Question: What is the [specific] intention of that?

Answer: Within the fundamental nature, the way things are, absolute dharmakāya is not non-existent. That is because the selfhood that is the pure selfhood of suchness, the great nature of buddhahood, can never be nothingness.

However, within **the fundamental nature**, the way things are, the relative form kāyas are non-existent. That is because no relative phenomena at all are established [as truly existing.]

Moreover, it is not said that the great self of buddhahood 1) exists **inseparably** within [relative] mind, and 2) does not exist **inseparably** within [absolute] pristine wisdom,

Thus, we do not say [without qualification] that the Buddha is existent or that the Buddha is non-existent. [As cited previously,] the *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

Without distinction earlier and later,
Without all defilements of obscuration,
Suchness is maintained to be buddhahood.
It is not pure and it is not impure.

When emptiness is completely purified,
The selfless ultimate self is then attained;
Since the buddhas attain that purified self,
That is the selfhood known as “the great self.”

Therefore, it is never to be said
That the Buddha is existent or non-existent.
When this question is asked about the Buddha,¹⁶⁷⁷
The reply should be maintained in a neutral manner.¹⁶⁷⁸

Just like **pacified** heat in [cooling] iron,
And pacified floaters in [recovered] eyes,¹⁶⁷⁹
Do not say Buddha¹⁶⁸⁰ exists or he does not
Without distinguishing mind and pristine wisdom.¹⁶⁸¹

The intention of the many teachings that “no assertions should be made” in [Madhyamaka] is 1) being without speech, thought, and expression on the occasion of passing the pass [into the formless meditation of the noble ones,] and 2) [saying] just what is said in that passage on the occasion of making distinctions within subsequent attainment.

Question: Does the Buddha appear or not appear?

Answer: The reply should be neutral, saying, “The Buddha does not appear and also does not fail to appear.”

Question: What is the [specific] intention of that?

Answer: The Buddha appears or does not appear depending on whether someone has the good fortune of seeing the [Buddha or not.] *The Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

Just as fire blazes in one place,
But is [completely] peaceful¹⁶⁸² in another;¹⁶⁸³
In that way appearance and non-appearance
Of the buddhas should be understood.¹⁶⁸⁴

Also:

Just as the rays of the [ever-present] sun
Are said to be obstructed by clouds, and so forth;
So, the pristine wisdom of the buddhas
Is obstructed by the faults of sentient beings.

And:

Just as when a vessel of water is broken,
The moon’s reflection is no longer seen;
So, for sentient beings of bad **fortune**,
Forms of buddhas do not appear for them.

Also, the *Ornament of Clear Realization* says:

Even though rain falls, due to the king of the gods,
Seeds that are not suitable¹⁶⁸⁵ will not grow;
So, even though buddhas rise **within the world**,
Those with bad fortune do not experience their goodness.

Also, the noble one Nāgārjuna says:

Sentient beings, with their afflictive emotions,
Do not see the [blessed] tathāgatas;
Just as beings who are hungry ghosts
See the ocean’s water as dry land.

So, due to being obstructed by ignorance,
Beings imagine that buddhas are non-existent.
For such lowly ones of little merit¹⁶⁸⁶
What could be accomplished by a blessed one?

Yet, like supremely precious, **shining** jewels
Being placed in the hands of those who are blind,
For sentient beings who do meritorious actions,
In luminous light that is imbued with glory,

Blazing with the thirty-two major marks,
There will be a buddha abiding before them.

Similarly, absolute sugatagarbha, the essence in which ground and fruition are inseparable, is said not to appear, because, for consciousness, it does not manifest in perception, does not appear, and is not evident; however, it is said to appear to pristine wisdom, because, [in that case,] it is apprehended as, “great illumination of great appearance.”

[The intention of] saying “It is not pure and not impure,” and “It is not afflicted and not non-afflicted,” is similar. Similarly, Nāgārjuna’s *Root Verses on the Middle Way* says:

“It is empty” is not [to be] said.
 “It is not empty” should also not be said.
 Also, do not say “it is both” or “neither.”¹⁶⁸⁷

The intention there [of saying that we should make no assertions] is [what should be done in] the occasion of profound meditation, [as already described.]

However, when Nāgārjuna says, “That should be said in order to designate it,” The intention is [what should be done in] the occasion of subsequent attainment. His *Eliminating Objections* says:

If I had any thesis,
 I would have that fault;
 But since I have no thesis,
 I am simply faultless.

Also, [Āryadeva’s *Four Hundred*] says:

For one without partiality of existence,
 Non-existence, or both of the above,
 Criticism cannot be expressed
 Not even after a very long time has passed.

The intention of such statements, once again, is that 1) [formless] meditation must be non-conceptual and free from proliferations, and 2) there should be no assertions in subsequent attainment that do not accord with the fundamental reality of the natural state.¹⁶⁸⁸

Nāgārjuna’s *Sixty Stanzas on Reasoning* says:

When there are assertions about the real,¹⁶⁸⁹
 There will be views that are intense and wild,
 Giving rise to passion and aggression¹⁶⁹⁰
 As well as the quarrels that arise from them.

[Assertions] are the cause of all **bad** views.
 Without them the afflictions will not arise.
 Therefore, when that is completely understood,
 Views and afflictions are completely cleansed....

Also, Bhāvaviveka’s *Precious Lamp of the Middle Way* says:

The master, Nāgārjuna, once said:

When there are assertions about reality,¹⁶⁹¹
 Fears of nothingness, and so forth, rise.
 Without such assertions about reality,¹⁶⁹²
 How could fears like nothingness arise?

If real compounded things exist **in the nature**,
 Then the world would also have an end,
 And also, it would have no end, and so forth.¹⁶⁹³

And:

If **conditioned** realities existed **in the nature**,
 That would certainly need to be asserted.
 But since reality was never born,
 How can any assertions be made **at all**?

And:

As for real things to be asserted,¹⁶⁹⁴
 Not even a particle of them exists.¹⁶⁹⁵
 Because they are primordially unborn,
 As is the case for the child of a barren woman.

For example, if a barren woman
 [Should be asked by someone,] "Who is your child?"
 She can have nothing at all to say about it,
 Because a child of hers does not exist.

If you see the intention of teachings of asserting no theses in that way,
 you will purely and truly see the meaning of the great intention **that you
 should be without assertions 1) that are not in accord with the meaning of
 subsequent attainment,¹⁶⁹⁶ and assertions 2) that are in accord with the
 meaning of meditation.¹⁶⁹⁷**

However, if according to what some others say, you maintain that you
 proclaim no theses because nothing is established in the way things are,
 that does not accord with reality at all. That is because all the previously
 discussed qualities of the absolute ground of emptiness always abide
 within the [fundamental] way things are.

2'. **Abandoning Assertions That No Phenomena are Resolved as Perfectly Established in the Way Things Are**

Those who assert that, [all phenomena are] excluded from the perfectly
 established by non-affirming negations, and, aside from that, no
 phenomena are resolved as [being included in] the perfectly established by
 affirming negations are very mistaken, because 1) faults are [primordially
 and] naturally non-existent in the profound way things are. Since they are
 [primordially] unestablished there, their being excluded, [non-affirmingly]
 negated, and abandoned is [primordially and] naturally complete. 2) In
 the ground [of non-existence] of these faults, all the [absolute] qualities

of dharmatā are [primordially and] naturally complete. Realization that they perfectly established by affirming negation is also primordially [and naturally] complete.

[Jinaputra's] *Commentary on Mātricheṭa's Praise of the Three Jewels* says:

The negation "This does not possess that" is an affirming negation [of this that lacks that.] These kinds of conceptual thoughts do not exist [in the way things are,] because its naturally luminous pristine wisdom excludes them.

3'. **Teaching that Great Nirvāṇa is the Meaning of "Inseparable Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa"**

Objection: Is not your assertion "great nirvāṇa is established as the way things are" refuted in the *Chapter Examining Nirvāṇa* in Nāgārjuna's *Root Verses on the Middle Way* and elsewhere?

Answer: You have to be very competent with the intention of the *Root Verses on the Middle Way*, which says:

Even though it has been maintained that there is nirvāṇa
Due to abandoning [resulting in] cessation,¹⁶⁹⁸

Without abandoning, and also without attainment,¹⁶⁹⁹
Without nothingness and without eternal existence,
Without cessation [of anything] and also without arising,
That is how nirvāṇa [ought to be] maintained.¹⁷⁰⁰

Two kinds of nirvāṇa are taught there. 1) Relative nirvāṇa is refuted by reasoning **that analyzes** for absolute truth, so Nāgārjuna denies it. 2) [Absolute] great nirvāṇa is established by reasoning [that analyzes ultimate experience of dharmatā,] so the noble one Nāgārjuna affirms it. He also maintains that absolute nirvāṇa is the meaning of the inseparability of cyclic existence and peace, and the inseparability of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. His *Sixty Stanzas on Reasoning* says:

Cyclic existence and **relative** nirvāṇa,
Are two things that do not exist **in the nature**.
Completed knowledge of '**other**' cyclic existence,¹⁷⁰¹
Is the very thing that is known as **great** nirvāṇa.

The *Stainless Light* also says:

Completed knowledge of '**other**' cyclic existence, **in self-aware**
pristine wisdom, is said to be **the great** nirvāṇa.

The *Hevajra Tantra* says:

...with the nature of the **absolute** aspect, EVAM.¹⁷⁰² (31b)

Because of being the guardian¹⁷⁰³ of **absolute** bliss,
This, dharmadhātu, is famed as Sukhāvati.¹⁷⁰⁴
It is the state of abiding of the buddhas,

The bodhisattvas, and the vajra holders. (32)

This itself¹⁷⁰⁵ is what is known as ‘saṃsāra.’¹⁷⁰⁶

This itself is **the essence that is** nirvāṇa.

Nirvāṇa is not something to be realized

As other than the abandoned aspect, saṃsāra. (33)

Saṃsāra consists of forms and sounds, and so forth,

Saṃsāra consists of [phenomena like] feelings.

Saṃsāra consists of the powers of sense themselves.

Saṃsāra consists of [phenomena like] hatred. (34)

The **nature** of these phenomena¹⁷⁰⁷ is nirvāṇa.

They have the form of saṃsāra due to delusion.

Since, without delusion, saṃsāra is pure,¹⁷⁰⁸

Saṃsāra **itself** is **absolute suchness**, nirvāṇa. (35)

This is the mind of enlightenment that is nirvāṇa,

As **inseparable** saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.¹⁷⁰⁹ (36a)

The *Root Verses on the Middle Way* says:

Saṃsāra does not have,

The least difference from nirvāṇa.

Nirvāṇa does not have,

The least difference from saṃsāra.¹⁷¹⁰

That¹⁷¹¹ which is the ultimate for nirvāṇa

Is that¹⁷¹² which is the ultimate for saṃsāra.

[Nāgārjuna’s] autocommentary, the *Akutoḥayā*, says:

That is the **pure and true** ultimate for saṃsāra. The **pure and true ultimate** for these two, **saṃsāra and nirvāṇa**, does not have even the slightest, subtle difference.... the pure and true ultimate for saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, the unborn ultimate, and the pure and true ultimate altogether, in equality that is unobservable **by consciousness**, do not have even the slightest, subtle difference.

And also:

The non-arising of the [relative] skandhas is nirvāṇa.

The holy *Paramāḍya Tantra* explains:

Meditate on all of the buddha forms

That are in the three realms, without remainder.

Vajrapāṇi’s commentary on the first part of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* also speaks of “the buddha forms of the three realms,” and among many absolute names for these occurring in songs are:

The supreme within the beautiful three worlds...

And:

The lovely, beautiful three worlds...

Also, in another of more than twenty maṇḍala liturgies, it says:

Absolute existence is essentially pure.

That essence is [also] made free from [all] saṃsāric existence.

Endowed with [absolute] mind that is naturally pure,

Absolute, holy existence is [thus] produced in attainment.

The profound intention of the extensive teachings of these points, the inseparable [absolute] reality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, should be comprehended from the instructions of the holy gurus.

4'. **Teaching That the Unity of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa is a Third Alternative Without Contradiction**

There are many characterizations of the unity of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, like “existence without existence,” and “The three realms as one.” Their intention that is without contradiction is taught in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*:

The body of a tathāgata of the fundamental way things are is one that is not a compounded body, but [an absolute] body¹⁷¹³ that is unborn and unceasing.

And:

Though free from relative mind, absolute mind is not free from mind [altogether]. Mind without equal is not non-existent there. The essence without [relative] going and coming is not without aspects of absolute going and coming.

And:

That without a relative owner is not without an absolute owner.

And:

That which is not relative letters is not without absolute letters.
It is not relative meditative absorption, but it is not without absolute meditative absorption.
What is not viewable by consciousness appears in perception for pristine wisdom.
Non-instantiation of relationship instantiates non-relationship.
Non-support of relationship supports non-relationship.
What is not darkness [in the absolute] is not light in the relative.
What is not [vacuous] peace understood by Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas, is not the non-peace of saṃsāra.
What is without any faults is not without any virtues.

And:

What is without relative phenomena is not without absolute phenomena.

What is not a **compounded** field of merit is not without any field of merit at all.

What is **absolute** emptiness is free from **relative** emptiness.

The eternally abiding **essence** does not eternally abide **as a relative phenomenon**.

And:

Though the Tathāgata performs benefits for all sentient beings, he has no **conception of** benefit being performed for sentient beings.

Though sentient beings are completely liberated, there are no **conceptions of** sentient beings being completely liberated.

Though sentient beings are completely purified, there are no **conceptions of** sentient beings being completely purified.

And:

Though they always course in one vehicle,¹⁷¹⁴ sentient beings see three. That [vehicle] is not [rightly] characterized **as compounded**, but abides with **uncompounded** characteristics.

And:

The **relative** skandhas, sense sources, and sense constituents are not the **absolute** skandhas, sense sources, and sense constituents. The absolute ones do not increase or diminish, and they are not good or bad **in the conceptual, relative sense**.

Thus, the kāya of the Tathāgata has immeasurable good qualities that are not knowable **by consciousness**, but are not unknown **by pristine wisdom**.

The relative is not seen, but the absolute is not unseen.

The **essence** is not compounded, and not uncompounded, like space that has **no power, aspects, and pristine wisdom**.

The **essence** is not worldly, but **its aspects are** not unworldly.

The **essence** is not made, but **its aspects are** not unmade.

The **relationships of phenomena** are not abiding, but their **non-relationship, similarly, is** not non-abiding.

Relative arising is not the four greatneses.¹⁷¹⁵ **Absolute arising** is not without the four greatneses.

The **essence** is not **a relative** cause, but not without being an 'other' cause, **and saying that is without contradiction**.

The **essence** has no relative sentient beings, but is not without **absolute** sentient beings.

The **essence** is not **relative** body, but not without **absolute** body.

And:

When the form kāyas pass into nirvāṇa, **[their momentary manifestations] go away as impermanent**. Dharmakāya does not pass into nirvāṇa, **because it never goes away as impermanent**. The dharmakāya of the Tathāgata possesses immeasurably many such [permanent buddha] qualities. Kāśyapa, these qualities are known

by the tathāgatas alone. They are not known by Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas.

These extensive teachings should be understood, according to the profound instructions. Similarly, the *Great Cloud Sūtra* says:

That essence exists of which it is said,
The essence of phenomena that are unequal and very unequal is not
without equality,¹⁷¹⁶

And:

The essence of phenomena of suffering and unhappiness is bliss.

And:

Empty of the dependent and totally empty of the imagined, but not
empty of perfectly established dharmatā...

And:

Phenomena that are impermanent and utterly impermanent are in
essence utterly permanent.

And:

The relative is selfless, but the absolute is very much selfhood,

And:

Phenomena are ugly or very ugly, but the essence is utterly
beautiful.

Also, the *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras* says:

That which is non-existent,¹⁷¹⁷ in its nature,¹⁷¹⁸
Is the best of things that are existent.
That which is unobservable in all ways¹⁷¹⁹
Is said to be the most excellent thing observed.¹⁷²⁰
Meditation that does not view¹⁷²¹ meditation
Is said to be the best kind of meditation.¹⁷²²
The attainment of those without a view of attainment ¹⁷²³
Is said to be the very best kind of attainment.

You should understand the intention of what is taught there, and in very many, nay extremely many, other texts of the profound sūtras and tantras, and one and another of the exalted bodhisattva commentaries, to be without contradiction.

5'. **Explaining that Knowing These Texts Like That is a Sign of Seeing the Great Intention of the Conqueror's Children**

If these texts are seen like that, the meaning of the great intention is seen:

Affection and pleasant speaking,
Stable, extending the hand,¹⁷²⁴

Untangling the deep intention,
These are signs of intelligence.

These five are in accord with the five signs of a bodhisattva taught by the victorious Maitreya.

(c). **Teaching the Sources and Qualities of the Three Kāyas that are Well Known Throughout the Great Vehicle**

Regarding these three kāyas that are included within the two truths, the *Holy Golden Light Sūtra* says:

Child of noble family, the nirmāṇakāya of all the buddhas is in accord with the actions of all the buddhas.

The sambhogakāya of all the buddhas is in accord with the intentions of all the buddhas.

The dharmakāya of all the buddhas is in accord with the body of all the buddhas.

And:

Child of noble family, nirmāṇakāyas appear in manifestation depending on sambhogakāya.

Sambhogakāya appears in manifestation depending on dharmakāya.

Dharmakāya is true and pure [absolute] reality, so it does not rest on a [relative] relationship of causal dependence with anything.

And:

Child of noble family, regarding this, child-like ordinary beings are far away from the three kāyas, because they are bound and obscured by three kinds of conceptual characteristics. What are these three? They are conceptual characteristics [of the three natures] 1) the imagined, 2) the dependent, and 3) the perfectly established.

As long as these three kinds of conceptual characteristics are not respectively 1) known [as nothingness], 2) stopped, and 3) purified, the three kāyas are not attained. Through knowing, stopping, and completely purifying these three kinds of characteristics, blessed buddhas completely perfect these three kāyas [that are beyond conception.]

Child of noble family, child-like ordinary beings are far away from the three kāyas, because they have not abandoned three kinds of consciousness [that comprise the eight collections of consciousness.] What are these three? They are 1) consciousness of the six collections of sense engaging with [relative] real things, 2) the afflicted mental sense w[hose seeds] abide within the all ground. 3) The [conceptualized] all ground consciousness.

[Regarding how these three are abandoned by abiding on three paths:] 1) Through abiding on the path of purification, the six

engaging or [sense] consciousnesses are purified. 2) Through abiding on the path of cutting off, the afflicted mental sense, [whose seeds] abide within the all ground, is purified. 3) By abiding on the path of supreme victory, the all ground consciousness is purified.

[Regarding the fruitions of separation that result from abandoning these three kinds of consciousness:] 1) when the engaging consciousnesses are purified, *nirmāṇakāya* is revealed. 2) When [the afflicted mental sense that is rooted in] the all ground is purified, *sambhogakāya* is revealed. 3) When the all ground consciousness is purified, *dharmakāya* is revealed. Thus, the three *kāyas* of all the *tathāgatas* are said to be self-existing.

And:

Moreover, child of noble family, by completely purifying obscurations of the afflictive emotions, *dharmakāya* manifests in appearance as *sambhogakāya*.

By completely purifying obscurations of karma, *nirmāṇakāya* manifests in appearance.

By completely purifying obscurations of pristine wisdom, *dharmakāya* manifests in appearance.

As lightning arises, depending on an empty sky,
And depending on the rising of lightning, light appears.
So, depending on *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya* appears.
And depending on *sambhogakāya*, *nirmāṇakāya* appears.

Since the nature is pure, *dharmakāya* appears.
Since pristine wisdom is pure, *sambhogakāya* appears.
Since meditation is pure, *nirmāṇakāya* appears.

Then, after teaching about the two form *kayas*, the Buddha speaks further, saying:

Child of noble family, how should a bodhisattva great being know *dharmakāya*? That which, abides only as suchness and self-arising pristine wisdom of the pure and true, because it is free from all obscurations of the afflictive emotions and has perfected all good phenomena, is called “*dharmakāya*.”

The two form *kāyas* are merely imputed. *Dharmakāya* is truly real. It acts as the ground of the two form *kāyas*. Why so? Because those two form *kāyas* entirely lack the [absolute] phenomena of buddhahood, and because they are separate from the suchness of phenomena and completely non-conceptual pristine wisdom.

Since the *tathāgatas* have reached the ultimate that perfects pristine wisdom and abandons all afflictive emotions, the buddha level of complete purity is attained. Due to the suchness of the phenomena and pristine wisdom of that true purity, the phenomena of buddhahood are completely held by them.

Moreover, child of noble family, all the buddhas have reached the completion of the benefits for themselves and others. The [absolute] suchness of phenomena produces the benefit for themselves. [Relative] pristine wisdom of that suchness produces the benefit for others. Because [the buddhas] have attained mastery over bringing about the benefits for themselves and others, their activities, in [all] their limitless variety, are spontaneously established.

Concerning the teaching that pristine wisdom of suchness produces the benefit for others:

1. When pristine wisdom is [taught to be] self-arising, it is [within] the changeless perfectly established. Therefore, the meaning is the same as that of the teaching in the *Kālacakra Tantra* that dharmakāya [ultimately] produces the benefit for others.

2. When pristine wisdom is taught to arise from others, it has the same meaning as this teaching in the *Sublime Continuum*:

Dharmakāya should be known to have two aspects,
1. Dharmadhātu that is completely without defilement,
And 2. teaching according with [the cause of attaining] that.
Taught in the modes of profundity and variety.

That is, 1) authentic dharmakāya is dharmadhātu, whose [absolute] nature is completely pure. Arising from its blessing, there is 2) [Relative] pristine wisdom of the pure and true, by which Dharma teachings of the profundity [of the essence] and vast variety [of the extent of phenomena] produce benefits for others.¹⁷²⁵

(d). **Teaching Other Wonderful Particulars of the [Buddha] Qualities**

Asaṅga's *Bodhisattva Levels* says:

Moreover, regarding other enumerations, the one hundred and forty unshared phenomena of buddhahood, the tathāgatas' absence of afflictive emotions, their knowledge of whatever they aspire to know,¹⁷²⁶ and their correct awareness of individual [phenomena] are called unsurpassable, true, complete enlightenment.

The one hundred and forty unshared phenomena of buddhahood are: the thirty-two major marks of a great being, the eighty minor marks, the four complete purity of all phenomena, the ten powers, the four fearlessnesses, the three mindful establishments, the three non-guardings, the great compassion, the nature of non-forgetting, perfect destruction of habitual tendencies, and knowledge of the supreme with all its aspects.

There, and so forth, [the qualities of buddhahood] are extensively taught. Regarding the immeasurable wealth of qualities of this complete transformation, The *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

The wealth possessed by the Śrāvakas
 Outshines that of the worldly.¹⁷²⁷
 That of the Pratyekabuddhas
 Outshines that of the Śrāvakas.

That does not match even a portion
 Of that of the bodhisattvas.
 That does not match even a portion
 Of that of the tathāgatas.

The wealth of [all] the buddhas,
 As to who, where, and how,
 How much, and the times of occurrence,¹⁷²⁸
 Are unthinkable beyond measure.

When the five sense powers are transformed,
 Each **power** works on all objects.
 With a hundred and twelve total qualities,¹⁷²⁹
 Excellent wealth is attained.

By transforming **afflicted** mentality
 To action according with wealth,
 In conceptionless, undefiled wisdom,
 Excellent wealth is attained.

By transforming grasped objects and grasper,¹⁷³⁰
 Whatever is desired is enjoyed.
 Since that is displayed, in pure lands,
 Excellent wealth is attained.

By transformation of concepts,¹⁷³¹
 Since wisdom and **buddha** activity
 Are always unobstructed,
 Excellent wealth is attained.

When the support is transformed,¹⁷³²
 In the undefiled buddha realm,¹⁷³³
 Within non-dwelling¹⁷³⁴ nirvāṇa,
 Excellent wealth is attained.

When the sexual¹⁷³⁵ is transformed,
 We abide in the bliss of the buddhas,
 Unafflicted by seeing women,¹⁷³⁶
 And excellent wealth is attained.

When perception of space is transformed,¹⁷³⁷
 Through wealth of objects of thought,
 Going, and access to forms,¹⁷³⁸
 Excellent wealth is attained.

In the undefiled buddha realm,¹⁷³⁹
 By measureless transformations,
 Through inconceivable actions,¹⁷⁴⁰

Excellent wealth is attained.

The meaning of “transformation” here [is not that relative phenomena are literally transformed into absolute ones. It] is that when consciousness ceases, [relative] pristine wisdom arising from others remains [and is revealed.] Since self-arising pristine wisdom is also attained by that, the qualities of both are attained. Those who say otherwise do not understand the [Buddha’s] intention. Candrakīrti’s *Entering into the Middle Way* says:

Whether they arise from dharmakāya or by the power of the form
kāyas, transformations arising from these bodies are explained to be
causes arising in accord with these bodies, from the cause of [the
aspirations of] sentient beings to be tamed. These are therefore also
said to possess inconceivable particulars of power, as follows:

In a single kāya of form, the lords of sages,
According with their causes,¹⁷⁴¹ only all at once,
Display the occasions of their former places of birth,
clearly, without confusion, in all of their details.

In order to display their own past occasions of birth in beginningless
saṃsāra, before their present occasion of omniscient pristine
wisdom, clearly, without confusion, and without mixing up their
many details; the buddhas spontaneously display all of them in a
single body, according with its cause, and only simultaneously. [This
display is] like a perfectly correct reflection of [many] faces in one
circular mirror. They course spontaneously, displaying in one body
how all the bodhisattva actions they [formerly] practiced arose;
what they were; and where, how, and for whose benefit they
occurred. To express that it is said:

In what sort of buddha fields these lords of sages were,
What their bodies, actions, and powers there were like,
How many their Śrāvaka Saṅgha, and what their nature were
like,
What the bodies of bodhisattvas there were like,

The different kinds of Dharma, and the kinds of self in these,
The Dharmas that were heard, and the practices that were
practiced,
What kind of gifts were offered to them in those places,
All of these are displayed by them in a single body.

These former blessed ones display entirely, in a single body, all the
blessed buddhas to who they did worshipful service when they were
practicing the perfection of generosity. [They also display] the
buddha fields where their actions of birth, and so forth, were
performed; their nature of lapis lazuli, ruby, sapphire, and crystal,
beautified with trees of precious substances, and so forth; their
bodies of water, their breadth and entirety; and how they were
beautified by the particular beings living there.

[They display] the bodies of those blessed buddhas, the excellent powers of their practices, how many of their Saṅgha of Śrāvakas gathered, and what they were like; that is, by what diligent aspects of Dharma that were in accord with Dharma they were among that Saṅgha of Śrāvakas.

[They display] what bodhisattvas were in the buddha fields of those blessed buddhas, how their bodies were adorned by the major and minor marks, the shapes they had, and what kinds of enjoyments they fully enjoyed, such as Dharma garments, food, and dwellings.

[They display] the kind of Dharma that was taught, whether it was taught with the support of one vehicle or three. All these things they display in a single body.

[They display] what kind of self they had – that is, whether they were born in the brahmin caste, and so forth, their forms and intelligence, whether they were householders or renunciates, and whether, on hearing the Dharma, they proclaimed training having a remainder or not having a remainder [of the skandhas after enlightenment.]

[They display] the practices they practiced, and what and how many gifts were offered to them. These blessed buddhas show these things, together with showing their Saṅgha of Śrāvakas and bodhisattvas, their food, and so forth, along with their dharma garments, precious adornments, and so forth, what was offered to them and how much, for how long, and in what measure. All that they display in a single body.

Just as they display the events of their activities of the perfections of generosity, they show in a single body the former occasions when they practiced discipline, patience, exertion, meditation, and prajñā without any incompleteness, and, without remainder.

Those are joined to the previous account. However, never mind their showing all these occasions together in a single body, all their practices

...are also clearly displayed even in every hair pore of their bodies.

Not only do they show their own practices, but also those of

All the buddhas who are in the past and future
And those of the present, to the limits of space,
Abiding in the world, teaching Dharma in lofty tones,
From grasping bodhicitta, to the essence of enlightenment,
Releasing beings who have been grasped by suffering,
Knowing that all these practices have the nature of illusion,
Like their own, in their pores, they show these all at once.

Even ordinary people who know a little about the ways of magical illusion can display various things that [seem to] abide in their bodies, just by the power of mantra. Then how could lords of beings

who are blessed buddhas and bodhisattvas not be able to do this, since they know that the nature of things to be like, and not different from, the nature of illusion? What wise person would have doubts about **buddhas with their limitless qualities being able to do this**? Therefore, the wise should have total belief in what is elucidated by this example.

Just as they display their own activities and the activities of other tathāgatas at the same time in [each of] their hair pores:

Likewise, they display all at once, in their hair pores
The activities, and moreover, all the occasions of birth
Of all the bodhisattvas abiding in three times,
The Pratyekabuddha noble ones, and all the Śrāvakas.

Having so expressed the excellence of their bodies, the main text, in order to teach how, even though they have no conceptual thought, they have mastery over wishes, says:

As for the pure [deeds] explained, drawn out by
aspirations,¹⁷⁴²
The worlds filling space are displayed in the realm of a single
atom,
And an atom as pervading [all] the limitless directions;
Yet the atom becomes no bigger and the worlds become no
smaller.¹⁷⁴³

The blessed buddhas, by their wishes, display limitless worlds filling the limits of space, in the realm of a single atom. The worlds become no smaller, and the atom becomes no larger. **Merely** by their wishes, they show them, as their essences abide. They also show a single atom as pervading the limitless worlds of the directions. The blessed buddhas, merely by wishing, show the limitless directions, with all its worlds, without remainder, as being pervaded by a single atom. Likewise:

The variety of activities displayed in every instant,
By those without conception, until the end of saṃsāra;
The number that is displayed is quite unmatched
By the number of atoms in all of Jambuling.

You who are without conceptual thoughts, as long as saṃsāra lasts, regarding the number of various activities that you display from instant to instant, the number that is the measure of these does not exist in all the atoms of Jambuling, without remainder. This is a praise of the blessed buddhas by expressing their extraordinary, outstanding qualities.

Mañjuśrī, it is like this, to give an example **of grasping ultimate eternity through teaching an immense number transcending the scope of mind of sentient beings**: There is a lake of 500,000 yojanas, equal in extent and depth, that is suitable for a raven to drink,¹⁷⁴⁴

and it is covered by lotus petals.

Because of that, a person there has an iron chariot with thousand-spoked wheels, drawn [over the lake by a horse that runs] faster than a garuḍa [flies]. As the horse draws that swift chariot, the wheels do not touch the water, and the horse's hooves do not break the lotus petals. From that chariot being drawn [over the lake,] from that great lake rises [an immense,] poisonous serpent. In the time it takes the chariot to circle [the lake,] the serpent circles the chariot ten times.

Mañjuśrī, in the time it takes for the poisonous serpent to circle the chariot once, the monk Ānanda explains the teachings of ten aspects of Dharma and makes their meaning be understood.

In the time it takes for the monk Ānanda to explain one teaching of Dharma, the monk Śāriputra explains the teachings of one thousand aspects of Dharma and makes their meaning be understood.

In the time it takes for the monk Śāriputra to explain one teaching of Dharma, the elder Maudgalyāyana **miraculously** traverses 80,000 world realms.

In the time it takes for the elder Maudgalyāyana to traverse one world realm, the Tathāgata displays [the following actions] simultaneously in every continent of the universe of world realms, in the ten directions departing from abiding in the Tuṣita realm; birth; renunciation; performing austerities; **practicing** yoga; proceeding to Bodhgaya; taming the māras; becoming truly; completely enlightened; turning the wheel of Dharma; displaying the great nirvāṇa;¹⁷⁴⁵ the Dharma remaining; the Dharma disappearing.

These events appear at the same time as [the Sage's] actions in the country of the Indian extremists and in all the Jataka tales of the Buddha's lives....

So, all this is taught in a most wondrous, marvelous inconceivable manner.

For all these simultaneous events, the apparent aspect is nirmāṇakāya, the empty aspect is dharmakāya, the knowledge aspect is sambhogakāya, and the essence aspect is svābhavikakāya.

By maintaining that, all these three realms are maintained to be the three or four kāyas of the Victorious one. Maintaining this lofty view displays breaking out of the degeneration of this dark age.

- (4). **The Explanation of Utterly Wondrous, Perfect Buddha Activity**
- (a). **Brief Explanation of Buddha Activity and Its Source**

Thus, with neither conception nor effort, a tathāgata is endowed with spontaneous buddha activity that continuously produces a variety of benefits for others, in all the times and directions of the universe. The *Sublime Continuum* says:

With their means of taming the dispositions of those to be tamed.¹⁷⁴⁶

They show many spontaneous actions of taming these dispositions.¹⁷⁴⁷

Going to the places and times where all these beings are,
The pervasive lords always enter there spontaneously.¹⁷⁴⁸

And:

Certainly, arising by the power of others,¹⁷⁴⁹

And seeing themselves and all sentient beings as being equal,¹⁷⁵⁰

And because their actions **cannot** entirely be completed,¹⁷⁵¹

They perform continuous actions as long as saṃsāra remains.

Also, the *Ornament for Clear Realization* says:

Likewise, it is maintained that as long as saṃsāra lasts,
The Buddha performs activities continuously...

The buddha activities performed by dharmakāya
Are explained to be of twenty-seven kinds.

Also, the *Holy Golden Light Sūtra* says:

Child of noble family, since the suchness of phenomena and the pristine wisdom of suchness have no conceptions, you may ask whether [tathāgatas] have mastery of buddha activity.

Child of noble family, for example, a Tathāgata who has transcended suffering, by attaining mastery of aspirations, also performs all kinds of buddha activities. Production of mastery over all goals being established by suchness and the pristine wisdom of suchness is also like that....

Also, the *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras* says:

For the buddha qualities, the powers, and so forth,
Great enlightenment is like a mine of jewels.
For increasing the harvest of beings' goodness,
It is said to be similar to a great raincloud.

By perfecting merit and pristine wisdom,
It is said to be like the moon at its full.
Because of making pristine wisdom shine forth,
It is said to be similar to the great sun.

Just as measureless rays of light are mingled
With the disk that is the sun itself,
And they always engage in unified activities.¹⁷⁵²

That are shining forth to illuminate the world;

So it is said that measureless buddhas are mingled¹⁷⁵³

With the unsullied dhātu in itself.

The buddhas perform their activities as one,¹⁷⁵⁴

Producing the shining forth of pristine wisdom.

As for example, when one sun ray rises,

All the other rays arise as well;

So, the pristine wisdoms of the buddhas

Should all be known to rise at a single time.

Just as engagement with the rays of the sun

Is not produced with a sense of “me” and “mine;”

So, engagement with the buddhas’ wisdom

Is not produced with a sense of “me” and “mine,”

Just as all beings are illuminated,

By sending forth a single solar ray,

The buddhas’ wisdom. appearing all together,

Illuminates all objects of knowledge at once.

(b). **Extensive Explanation with Examples**

The *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

Thus,¹⁷⁵⁵ by the Conqueror’s good explanation throughout the directions,

With increase of virtue,¹⁷⁵⁶ the worldly¹⁷⁵⁷ go to the highest purity.¹⁷⁵⁸

Those who have not gathered virtue go to its highest increase.

The unripened are always ripened, yet never do none remain.¹⁷⁵⁹

Thus, throughout the directions of the world, stable bodhisattvas, at all times,

Attain great enlightenment, with wonderful, excellent qualities difficult to attain,

Stably¹⁷⁶⁰ permanent, a refuge for those with no refuge, such a great wonder,

Occurring by practice of the excellent way¹⁷⁶¹ in accord with it, is not such a wonder after all.¹⁷⁶²

These [buddhas] show at one time wheels of Dharma with many hundreds of gates to some,¹⁷⁶³

To some no appearance of birth, to some the birth of precursors,¹⁷⁶⁴ doing various deeds,

To some the whole of enlightenment,¹⁷⁶⁵ and to some its passing away.¹⁷⁶⁶

They never move from their place,¹⁷⁶⁷ yet perform all these buddha activities.¹⁷⁶⁸

These buddhas never have the thought, “I formerly ripened this being.”

“I am ripening this one now,” Or “These I will ripen later.”
 Though without such formations, always in all directions, by way of
 the three gates,¹⁷⁶⁹
 They ripen beings fully, [nevertheless,] by various, excellent
 Dharmas.

Just as the sun, universally shining, with profuse and brilliant rays,
 Ripens harvests in every place, in all directions, and does so without
 effort;
 So, with its utterly pacifying rays of Dharma, the radiant sun of
 Dharma,
 Ripens sentient beings in all directions, universally.

As from a single butter lamp, a multitudinous host can be lighted,
 Countless and immeasurable, yet [the first] is not exhausted;
 So, from a single ripened being, multitudinous hosts can also be
 ripened,
 Countless and beyond measure, yet [the first] is not exhausted.

As the great ocean never has its fill of water,¹⁷⁷⁰
 And is never increased, as many great rivers flow into it;
 So, wondrous to tell, the dhātu of Buddha¹⁷⁷¹ never increases at all
 Or has its fill by constant, unbroken addition of further purity.¹⁷⁷²

And:

Just as the drum¹⁷⁷³ of the gods, without being beaten [by anyone,]
 Sends forth tintinnabulations, resounding everywhere;¹⁷⁷⁴
 So, for the conquerors, without deliberate action¹⁷⁷⁵
 Their explanations [of Dharma] always rise universally.

Just as a precious jewel, never making an effort,
 [Naturally] displays its own [intrinsic] light;
 So, for the conquerors, without deliberate action,
 Actions are displayed, [through their own intrinsic nature.]

Just as the activities of worldly beings
 Appear without interruption in [ordinary] space;
 So, the deeds of the conquerors are uninterrupted
 In the unsullied, absolute [space of dharma]dhātu.

And:

Rivers that cannot go underneath the ground,
 Have different waters found in [many] different places.
 The waters are small, performing separate actions,
 And they are enjoyed¹⁷⁷⁶ by little beings in the water.

When all those rivers flow into the ocean's [immensity,]
 Their places are one, and their waters are also one.
 Their actions are one, and the many kinds of beings
 Living within them always abide in great enjoyment.

So, stable **buddha children**, yet to enter **the ocean of** buddhahood

With different supports¹⁷⁷⁷ and different understanding,
Do temporary benefits enjoyed by just a few beings,
With little realization and different actions for **each**;

But when they all have entered **the ocean of** buddhahood,
They have only one support,¹⁷⁷⁸ one great realization,
And actions rolled into one, so that eternally
[The results] are greatly enjoyed by a great host of beings....

Also, the *Pristine Wisdom Chapter* in the *Kālacakra Tantra* says:

Real things¹⁷⁷⁹ associated with peace, desire, **aversion**, and so forth, are created by **beings'** own hearts, **or wishes** in former births.

By the power of habitual propensities, and qualities of the **former aspirations of those to be tamed**, the **three realms** abide in **limpid purity** in the circle of **dharmatā**, in the **intoxicating, great bliss of buddhahood**, with one **dharmakāya** seeing many **phenomena**.

In **that** one reality are many Words,¹⁷⁸⁰ **in accord with** the relative real things **of the disposition or wishes** of each **sentient being**; **[Words]** that totally enter into the hearts of living beings to be tamed.

For the sake of **increasing** the merit of **those** who are living **in houses, emanations**,¹⁷⁸¹ abiding within the pure clarity of the wheel of **Dharma**,¹⁷⁸² go wandering, begging for alms, **throughout the three realms**.

For animals, hungry ghosts, jealous gods, great belly-crawling **nāgas**, gods, and humans in the noble **land of India, China, Tibet**, and **limitless other countries**, **the Dharma** arose **in the past**, and will arise **in the future**, as it arises **now in the present**. That threefold dharma is taught, **in which the relative is always false**, and **absolute sugatagarbha** is always true.

In other languages of each [hearer], the [beings of the] three realms, without incompleteness, are purely and truly established on the path **of liberation**.

This speech of omniscience, bestowing the fruits of bliss and equality **on those to be tamed**, is not divine **Sanskrit** speech, and **also not that of any other incidental, lesser language**.

Not objects of realization, even of the buddhas; **that is, words about these things are excluded from realization**, because they are **extremely hard to understand**; the illusion-like emanations of the buddhas, possessing measureless qualities of **ripening and separation**

Reveal themselves in [different] places of the three realms, **for example**, like Indra's bow, **the rainbow**.

These revelations¹⁷⁸³ by various relative real things, are

appearances that fully enter the minds of each divine and human being who associates with the victorious ones.

Though they seem to be produced, these, in reality, are unborn phenomena, like, for example, the appearance of the color of the sky in pure water; but they bestow [on beings] delusions that they have been produced.

Also:

Those who attain dharmakāya, which is Kālacakra, by many great illuminations of miracle, send forth nirmāṇakāyas, giving rise to benefit for others. In that way, by wrathful ones who emanate blazing vajras, abiding in the desire realm, they give rise to benefits for malevolent gods, the jealous gods, and human beings;

And benefiting those having form, like the gods of the realms of form, by sambhogakāya; and, by dharmakāya, in [formless] space, benefiting buddha children and others, referring to arhats and Pratyekabuddhas [of the Lesser Vehicle].¹⁷⁸⁴

By the aspects of emptiness, sugatagarbha, abiding as the five elements, in all the three realms, they show their [unobstructed] totality as empty [space]; and likewise, by the aspects of [unobstructed] wind, they show the three realms to be the totality of wind.

By the aspects of [unobstructed] fire, they show all three realms to be the totality of fire; and having also having set forth the totality of water, they show it to beings, as the [unobstructed], watery aspect of sugatagarbha.

By the aspects of the holder, earth, they show the three realms as the [unobstructed] earth totality; and by assembled objects, 'other' forms, and so forth, all the 'other' natures of real things [are revealed as being] entirely pure, like space. Thus, they show the single nature of dharmadhātu, within pure mind, as also being pure earth.

Becoming the buddha kāyas, they abide as the vajra-like, solitary nature of bliss; and as that, they do not arise and they never die.

And:

When the glorious light of the moon at its full meets a moon-crystal water-jewel, water arises spontaneously, from its non-conceptual nature;

Likewise, in the world, depending of the skandhas of the Lord of Victorious Ones; Vajrasattva, sugatagarbha, and manifold phenomena of omniscience come forth in accord with the aspirations of sentient beings.

As the power of growth in water depends on its coming together

with seed of **various** natures; **water and the many seeds it contacts** are of one taste, **as are the various sprouts, and so forth, arising from them.** The pure phenomena **associated with buddhahood** are similar.

By **the power** of the good thoughts of beings **who are to be tamed,** there are many phenomena **that have a variety of pure manners of mind,** due to the power of **a various** former **good** karmic [actions].

The *Stainless Light* says:

Therefore, through beings' habitual traces from other births, the body and speech of a blessed one appear, like apparent arising of bodies in dreams that do not [really] rise. As when, in a dream, a student may see a learned monk and ask about a subject of doubt, and the learned monk replies, making the student's doubts no longer exist; no monk is really there, but [both the monk and the answer] appear, due to habitual traces in the mind of the student;

Appearances of buddhas too are appearances in the minds of sentient beings who have that merit. No blessed one ever [truly] arises or [truly] ceases.

(c). **Extensive Explanation with Many Examples**

The *Sublime Continuum* says:

Just as if the ground that is here was of the nature
Of pure [and polished] vaidūrya,¹⁷⁸⁵ so that within [its surface,]
[The reflection of] Indra, the king of the gods would appear [and] be
seen,

Together with a retinue of the daughters of the gods,

With his excellent palace, [whose name is] Perfectly Victorious,
As well as further divine abodes that are other than that,
With the variety of all his [elegant] palaces,
And many **[other] reflections** of the wealth of the gods.

Then great multitudes of men and women,
Who were abiding on the earth [at that time],
Would see the appearances **of these reflections**
And so, would say, "May we too, before long,

Become just such a king of the gods [as this]."
Having made aspirations to [such birth],
In order to fulfil them, they would truly
Undertake and persist in virtuous conduct.¹⁷⁸⁶

When they had performed these virtuous actions,
Though they would not know that they saw a [mere] reflection,
When they died and transmigrated from this earth,
They would still be truly born as [celestial] gods.

These appearances **of reflections** are completely

Free from any movement of thoughts [of intention];
 Nevertheless, when they rise in the world,
 Their abiding there has [true,] great benefit.

Similarly, those with undefiled faith,
 Familiar with faith and other kinds of virtue,
 Will, [as a result,] see perfect manifestation
 In their minds, of buddhas appearing before them,

Displaying all the major and minor marks,
 [Sometimes] walking, [sometimes stopping and] standing,
 [Sometimes] sitting, [sometimes going to] sleep,
 [Sometimes] performing various other actions,

Teaching the holy Dharma of perfect peace,
 Or not teaching, but resting in meditation,
 Performing various miraculous displays
 Or other actions of awe-inspiring splendor.

When this has been seen by sentient beings¹⁷⁸⁷
 Since, having seen it, they will have desire,¹⁷⁸⁸
 They will apply themselves for buddhahood.¹⁷⁸⁹
 Having truly received the cause of striving,¹⁷⁹⁰
 They will truly attain the level they seek.

These appearances [of the buddhas] are completely
 Free from concept and utterly motionless.
 Though that is the case, within the world,
 They bring great benefits [for sentient beings].

Sentient beings indeed do not know that these
 Are **pure** appearances within their very own minds.
 Though that is so, on seeing these forms **of Buddhas**,
 Those **who see them still** have great benefit.

Gradually, with reliance on these visions,
 Those who are established in this vehicle
 Will see with the eye of [undefiled] prajñā
 The pure, true dharmakāya that is within them.

If all the earth were rid of other fearful places, becoming undefiled
 vaidūrya,
 Bright and beautiful with all that jewel's qualities, glorious, free
 from flaws, with a smoothly polished surface,
 Since it is pure and clear, within it, the host of divine abodes, and
 the form of the king of the gods would arise, with his retinue of
 daughters of the gods.
 Then, by the gradual fading of these qualities of the ground, these
 things again would not appear.

In order to really attain this, turning to the discipline of the one-day
 precepts,¹⁷⁹¹ **and the virtues of [the perfections]**, generosity, and so
 forth,

Men, women, and children, with an aspiring attitude, would scatter flowers, and so forth.
 Similarly, to attain the [state of the] Lord of Sages who appeared in their minds, like pure [and polished] vaidūrya,
 With very joyful minds, the Conqueror's children would feel the wish for enlightenment.

Just as¹⁷⁹² on a clean surface of vaidūrya,
 A reflection of the king of the gods appears;
 So, in the ground that is the pure mind of beings,
 A reflection of the King of Sages rises.

The subsiding or rising of these reflections¹⁷⁹³ in beings,
 Is due to pollution occurring or not in their minds.¹⁷⁹⁴
 Like reflections on a clear surface in the world,¹⁷⁹⁵
 These¹⁷⁹⁶ should not be viewed as¹⁷⁹⁷ created and destroyed.

[From time to time,] in the god realms,¹⁷⁹⁸
 By the power of former white karma,
 Without [deliberate] effort,
 With no place, mental form, or concept,

Resounding again and again with "impermanence,"
 "Suffering," "Selflessness," ["desirelessness,"] and "peace,"
 The Dharma drum invokes all the heavenly gods,
 Careless among their many desirable qualities,

So, the effortless, universal lord,
 To [all] sentient beings, without remainder,
 Speaks universally with buddha speech,
 Teaching the Dharma to those who are fortunate.¹⁷⁹⁹

Just as, in the realm of the gods, the sound
 Of the drum of the gods arises from gods' good karma,
 So, in the world, the Sage's Dharma speech
 Arises from karma of beings to be tamed.

In¹⁸⁰⁰ effortless freedom from body, mind, or place,
 The divine drum brings forth peace that is without care,
 So, without these four,¹⁸⁰¹ the Buddhadharma
 Establishes [perfect] peace without afflictions.

As, in the cities of the gods, the widespread sound of the drum grants fearlessness,
 When, through their afflictions, the gods engage in war with the jealous gods,
 So that they end their careless play and conquer the forces of jealous gods;
 So, in the world, what arises from the cause of formless meditation,¹⁸⁰²
 Grants the way of the unsurpassable path of peace that conquers the suffering and affliction of beings.¹⁸⁰³

Since the **speech of the buddhas** is **equal** for all beings,
 Joyful and beneficial, with three-fold miracles,¹⁸⁰⁴
 The Sage's harmonious speech is very much more exalted
 Than any [celestial] cymbals crafted of godly substance.

The great, [resounding] sound of the drum of the gods
 Does not reach the ears of those on earth;
 But¹⁸⁰⁵ the sound of the drum of buddha **speech**,
 Goes even to those below the ground of the world.

For the gods,¹⁸⁰⁶ many tens of millions of heavenly cymbals
 Sound for the purpose of stoking the flames of [blazing] desire;
 But the single song of those who are one with compassion
 Comes forth to bring pacification to all the flames of suffering.

The pleasant, beautiful sound of celestial cymbals
 Is the cause of increasing wild agitation.
 The speech of the buddhas, whose nature is compassion,
 Turns minds to meditation¹⁸⁰⁷ and contemplation.

In brief,¹⁸⁰⁸ in all the world realms, without remainder,
 Buddha speech brings joy in heaven and earth¹⁸⁰⁹
 And that upon which it completely depends

Appears pervasively in all the world **realms**.

Yet,¹⁸¹⁰ just as beings who are bereft of ears,
 Are unable to hear a subtle sound,
 And even for those who have the ear of the gods,
 Not every sound will come into their ears,

So, Dharma, which is subtle, **profound**, and fine,
 Is heard by only those who are able to hear it,¹⁸¹¹
 Who can receive the subtle [voice of] wisdom,
 And whose minds are free from afflictive emotions.

Just as¹⁸¹² the clouds of summer¹⁸¹³
 Are the cause of abundant harvests,
 And effortless masses of water
 Constantly fall to earth,

So, from clouds of compassion,
 The rain of holy Dharma
 Falls without conception.
 Causing the harvest of virtue,

Just as **by** the world's entry into the path of virtue¹⁸¹⁴
 Streams of rain are caused to fall from [nurturing] clouds,
 So, by beings' virtue, in streams of lovingkindness,
 The rain of holy Dharma falls from the clouds of enlightenment.

In saṃsāra, amidst the sky of wisdom and great compassion,
 Never covered by either the changing or unchanging,
 With the essence of water of meditation and retention,

The clouds of the Lord of Sages cause the harvest of virtue.

As water that is cool, delicious, soft, and light,
Falling from the clouds, when it is on the earth;¹⁸¹⁵
From the effect of salty places and the like,
It comes to be of very many different tastes;

So, the exalted rain, possessing the eight limbs
That falls from the clouds of love, pure sugatagarbha,
From the many kinds of beings' continuums,
Comes to have [qualities of] many flavors.

Also:¹⁸¹⁶

As Bhramā, without any motions
From his own Bhramā realm,
Can show his effortless presence,
In all the different god realms,

Not moving from dharmakāya,
Without effort, in all realms,
The Sage, to those of good fortune,
Teaches¹⁸¹⁷ through emanations.

Just as Bhramā, **while** never moving from his palace,¹⁸¹⁸ abides
among all the gods of the realm of desire,

Where he is seen by the gods, and all the gods who see him¹⁸¹⁹
abandon joy in their own realm;¹⁸²⁰

So, the sugata, **while truly** not moving from dharmakāya, in all
worlds,

Is seen by fortunate ones, and the [saṃsāric] defilements of those
that see him are always removed.

By the power of **Bhramā's [virtuous]** aspirations
And the virtuous [karma] of the gods themselves,¹⁸²¹
As Bhramā appears without effort **to all the celestial gods,**
The buddhas' self-arising emanations are similar.

Descent **from Tuśita**, entering **his mother's** womb, being born, going
into his father's palace,

Enjoying **his harem of queens**, solitary practice, overcoming the
māras,

Attaining great enlightenment, then teaching the path to the city of
peace,¹⁸²²

Having shown these, the Sage becomes invisible to those who lack
good fortune.

When the sun, by its rays,¹⁸²³ at the very same time,

Makes padma lotuses open and kumuda lotuses close,

The sun does not think that they open and close through virtues and
faults.

So it is for the buddha sunshine of the sublime.¹⁸²⁴

As the sun without conception,
By its own light shining everywhere,
Makes padma lotuses blossom.
And other plants **grow and** ripen,¹⁸²⁵

So, the Tathāgata sun,
Sends forth without conception
Rays of holy Dharma
To his lotuses to be tamed.

In the space of the essence, enlightenment,
As dharmakāya and sambhogakāya,
The sun of omniscience, for [all] sentient beings,
Emanates the light rays of pristine wisdom.

For this reason, in all the water vessels,
Which are [the minds of] beings to be tamed,
Reflections of the sun of the Sugata
Arise together in instances beyond counting.

Always pervading all of these [sentient beings,]
In the midst of the space of dharmadhātu,
The sun of Buddha, [with the great compassion,]
Descends on the mountains as appropriate.¹⁸²⁶

As the sun arising with copious thousands of light rays
Illuminates all the world, and successively
Falls on the highest, middling, and lower mountains,
So, the sun of the Conqueror falls on successive beings.¹⁸²⁷

The sun does not shine on all fields, nor to the limits of space,¹⁸²⁸
Nor¹⁸²⁹ show the meaning of knowables to those who are covered
by ignorance;¹⁸³⁰
But the nature of compassion, with light rays of various colors,¹⁸³¹
Shows all beings the meaning of knowable objects in clarity.

When the Buddha goes to cities, those with no eyes are able to see,
Free from collecting useless [qualities], seeing that reality, **Buddha**,
they experience **dharmatā**,
Those blinded by stupidity, who fell into the ocean of saṃsāra,
whose “order” is the darkness of conceptual views,¹⁸³²
By the Buddha sun shining on their understanding, see realms [of
truth] they could not see before.¹⁸³³

As a [precious] wish-fulfilling gem¹⁸³⁴
All at once, without conceptual thoughts,
Fulfills all the different, individual wishes
Of those within its sphere of activity,

So, through the **highest** wish-fulfilling **gem**
That is the Buddha, for [beings’] different wishes,
Though various [presentations of] Dharma are heard;
[The Buddha] has no conceptual thoughts of doing this.

As a wishing gem, without conception,
Bestows without effort the wealth that others desire,
So, without effort, the Sage will always remain
To benefit others, as long as saṃsāra lasts.

As wishing gems abide in the depths of the ocean,
It is very hard for beings here to find one;
So, you should know that for beings of bad fortune,
Gaining the sight of a Sugata is difficult.

As the sound of an echo arises,¹⁸³⁵
Due to other beings' mental awareness,
Without any thoughts or production,
And exists neither outside or inside;

So, the speech of the Buddha arises,
Due to other beings' mental awareness,
Without any thoughts or production,
And exists neither outside or inside.

Nothing at all,¹⁸³⁶ [kāya is] not apparent,¹⁸³⁷
Unobservable,¹⁸³⁸ it is without support,
Transcending visibility to the eyes,
It is formless and indemonstrable,

As in space,¹⁸³⁹ up and down are seen [by beings],
Though nothing like that [is found space itself];
For all that [beings] see of the Tathāgata¹⁸⁴⁰
Nothing like that [is found in reality].

As all that grows from the earth¹⁸⁴¹
Develops, [grows,] and increases,
And finally manifests firmly,
Depending on thought-free earth;

In dependence on that without thought,
The perfect ground of buddhahood,
The roots of beings' virtue,
Increase, without remainder.

Then, summarizing the meaning of these examples:

As with the drum of Indra, clouds,
Bhramā, the sun, and a wish-fulfilling gem,
An echo, space, and [accommodating] earth,
Effortless benefit is known by yogins.¹⁸⁴²

Showing appearance¹⁸⁴³ is like the king of the gods in a jewel
Excellent instruction is like the drum of the gods
Gathered clouds are like Buddhas' wisdom and loving-kindness,
Pervading limitless beings, up to the peak of saṃsāra.

Like Bhramā, not moving from their undefiled abode,
They manifest manifold emanations [to sentient beings].

Like the sun, they emanate the shining forth of wisdom.
Their minds are pure like the precious wish-fulfilling gem.

The Conquerors' speech, like an echo, is letterless.
Their body, like space, is eternal, pervasive, and formless.
Like the earth, buddhahood is the universal ground
Of all the medicinal herbs of beings' white phenomena.

In good vaidūrya-like mind,
The cause of seeing the Buddha,
Is cultivating the faculty
Of irreversible faith.

As [worldly] goodness may arise and be destroyed,
Buddha forms may rise and be destroyed;
But, like Indra, the Sage's dharmakāya
Has no arising and is without destruction.

Like [the king of the gods,] without any effort,
From unborn, unceasing dharmakāya,
For as long as saṃsāra may remain,
Buddhas will show their actions as manifestation.

And:¹⁸⁴⁴

The buddha kāya is like the king of the gods' reflection,
But not the same, as [Indra] lacks [Buddha's] melody.¹⁸⁴⁵
Buddha¹⁸⁴⁶ is like the drum of the gods, but not the same.
[That drum] does not do benefit in all buddha fields.

Buddha is like the great rain cloud,¹⁸⁴⁷ but it is not the same,
As clouds do not abandon seeds that are not useful.
Buddha is like great Bhramā,¹⁸⁴⁸ but it is not the same,
Because great Bhramā does not ripen [buddhahood].

He is like the form of the sun,¹⁸⁴⁹ but it is not the same,
Because the sun cannot forever conquer darkness.
He is like a wish-granting gem,¹⁸⁵⁰ but it is not the same,
Because the Buddha is not so difficult to find.

Buddha is like an echo,¹⁸⁵¹ but it is not the same,
Because an echo arises from [incidental] conditions.
He is like [empty] space,¹⁸⁵² but it is not the same,
Because [mere empty space] is not the ground of goodness.

Buddha is like the maṇḍala of the earth
In that his existence is the support
Of all perfections of beings, without remainder,
Both the worldly and the world-transcending.

The rising of the world-transcending path
Depends upon the Buddha's enlightenment,
The path of virtuous action, meditation,
The [four] immeasurables, and [the four] formless absorptions.

The son of the Victorious One Śantideva's *Entering into Bodhisattva Activity* says:

When neither things nor non-things
Abide before the mind,¹⁸⁵³
Since there are no other aspects,¹⁸⁵⁴
Not observing¹⁸⁵⁵ is total peace.¹⁸⁵⁶

As, a wish-fulfilling gem or tree,
Completely grants whatever we may hope for;
So, by the¹⁸⁵⁷ aspirations of those to be tamed,
The kāyas of the victorious ones appear.

Like, for example, garuḍa's reliquary,
That can pacify poison and other harms,
Though the one who blessed it [with those powers]¹⁸⁵⁸
Passed away a very long time ago.¹⁸⁵⁹

So, in accord with bodhisattva practice,
The reliquary that is a buddha is blessed,
And [forever] performs all kinds of benefits,
Though those bodhisattvas have passed into nirvāṇa.

By the worship of something that is mindless,
How could there be such [excellent] effects?
Because it¹⁸⁶⁰ is explained to be the same,
Whether a buddha is living or in nirvāṇa.¹⁸⁶¹

(5). **Teaching the Pervasive Distinctions of Pure Lands and Described Settings of Teachings of the Sūtras and Tantras**

You need to know the distinctions of the two truths in regard to buddha fields whose most extremely wonderful, marvelous, perfect kāyas, pristine wisdoms, buddha qualities, and buddha activities are inconceivable in nature. The absolute Buddha is innate, natural great bliss VAM. His [absolute] buddha field is E, the source of dharmas, emptiness with the supreme of all aspects, the supporting maṇḍala, and the 'other' vessel that is the world.

The buddha fields of the relative form kāyas are the ones well-known to learned ones. These completely pure buddha fields are **taught to be** included within the truth of the path.

Impure buddha fields [like this World of Fortitude] are included within the truth of suffering. In brief, the buddha fields of the form kāyas are included within relative truth, and buddha fields of dharmakāya are included within absolute truth.

You also need to know, according to the instructions of the holy gurus, the distinctions of the two truths in regard to the described settings of teachings of the sūtras and tantras, and whether the retinue and other details of the support and supported are different or not different from the principal one.¹⁸⁶²

(6). **Extensive Teaching of Other Characteristics**

(a). **Eliminating an Objection to the Essence of Ground and Fruition being Inseparable and Teaching How the Two Kāyas are Attained**

Objection: If the essence of ground and fruition is inseparable, what is the use of the path?

Answer: “The essence of ground and fruition is inseparable,” is said from the viewpoint of absolute dharmakāya, but not from the viewpoint of the relative form kāyas. The [relative] path is needed because 1) the [relative] accumulation of pristine wisdom, as non-conceptual prajñā of [formless] meditation [on emptiness], separates dharmakāya from primordially abiding defilements, [revealing the benefit for oneself.] 2) The [relative] accumulation of merit involves pristine wisdom that realizes phenomena to be like illusions in subsequent attainment, creating the [form] kāyas of symbolic communication for the benefit of others.

Regarding this, the *Sublime Continuum* says:

Briefly, non-conceptual pristine wisdom,
Which is said to be the [final] fruition,
Is purified of incidental afflictions,
Desire and such, like the water of a lake.¹⁸⁶³

That kāya of buddhahood is certainly attained.
As the possessor of the supreme of all aspects.
That [attainment] is taught to be [through] the fruition
Of the pristine wisdom of subsequent attainment.

Also, the *Discrimination of the Middle and the Extremes* says:

It is maintained to be pure through purification,
Like the elements of water, gold, and space.

The noble one Nāgārjuna’s *Precious Garland* says:

The form kāyas of the buddhas that we spoke of
Arise from the accumulation of merit.
Dharmakāya, briefly speaking, O king,¹⁸⁶⁴
Arises¹⁸⁶⁵ from the accumulation of wisdom.

Since that is so, these two accumulations
Are the causes of attaining enlightenment.

Also, the *Sixty Stanzas on Reasoning* says:

May the two excellent [kāyas] that arise
From merit and pristine wisdom be attained.

(b). **Brief Teaching of How Defilements are Purified and the Levels and Paths Traversed**

The *Holy Golden Light Sūtra* says:

Child of noble family, for example, persons who want gold search everywhere so that they can find gold ore, **where gold is mixed with stone**. Having ground up that gold ore, they melt out the essence, [gold,] and they purify it so that it is totally refined. Then, as they desire, they make that gold into various kinds of ornaments, like bracelets. Though they perform all these actions, the nature of gold does not change.

Child of noble family, sons and daughter of noble family who are devoted to the activities of worldly virtue may see the Tathāgata or the retinue of the Tathāgata. Having approached them, they may ask, “Blessed One, what is virtue? What is non-virtue? By performing what pure and true practice is pure and true conduct attained?”

When the blessed Buddha and his retinue have been asked this, they think, “These sons and daughters of noble family are devoted to hearing the holy Dharma. They desire complete purification. I will teach them the pure and true Dharma. On hearing it, they will properly take it to heart. They will produce a diligent attitude. By the power of diligence, they will eliminate the obstruction of laziness and all other phenomena of non-virtuous evil deeds.

Abiding with total dedication on all the points of training, eliminating the mind’s depression and manic wildness, they will enter the first [bodhisattva] level.

Depending on the mind of the first level, they will eliminate obscurations to exertion for the benefit of many sentient beings. By that they will enter the second [bodhisattva] level.

Eliminating afflictive emotions on that level, they will enter the third [bodhisattva] level.

Eliminating obscurations to purifying the mind on that level, they will enter the fourth [bodhisattva] level.

Eliminating obscurations to skillful means on that level, they will enter the fifth [bodhisattva] level.

Eliminating obscurations to observation of the absolute and the relative on that level, they will enter the sixth [bodhisattva] level.

“Eliminating obscurations to observing characteristics and activities on that level, they will enter the seventh [bodhisattva] level.

Eliminating obscurations to not observing the ceasing of [relative] characteristics on that level, they will enter the eighth [bodhisattva] level.

Eliminating obscurations to the arising of [absolute] characteristics on that level, they will enter the ninth [bodhisattva] level.

Eliminating obscurations to the six higher perceptions on that level, they will enter the tenth [bodhisattva] level.

By purifying the obscuration of dualistic knowables and the all ground consciousness on that level, they will enter into the level of a Tathāgata.”

Because the level of a Tathāgata has three-fold purity, that level is called “utterly and completely pure.” What is this three-fold [purity]? It is like this: There is complete purity from 1) afflictive emotions, 2) suffering, and 3) [conceptualized] characteristics.

So, from smelting and refining fine gold, it is no longer covered externally by faults and defilements. It appears with its [true] nature of pure gold, and the actuality of pure gold does not become non-existent.

So too, for example, muddy water is cleansed. When it has been completely cleansed, the nature of water is clearly present, and that water does not become non-existent.

Similarly, when all the various accumulations of afflictive emotions and suffering have been eliminated, and all habitual propensities have been cleared away; dharmakāya, the completely pure essence of buddhahood appears, and its actuality does not become non-existent.

As a further example, when obscurations of smoke, clouds, and mist become non-existent in space, the element of space becomes completely pure; but space itself does not become non-existent. So, dharmakāya is called “completely pure,” because all afflictive emotions have been exhausted; but dharmakāya itself does not become non-existent.

And:

Similarly, dharmadhātu is said to be “completely pure,” because of the non-arising of all conceptual thoughts [within it.] However, the pure and true kāya of the buddhas does not become non-existent....

I have not written extensively about how the paths and bodhisattva levels are traversed, since those points very well known.

Some profound scriptures maintain that the absolute, dharmakāya, and so forth, are empty of themselves, and hence, that dharmakāya and self-arising wisdom are not absolute.¹⁸⁶⁶ That approach is refuted, because

the scriptures also maintain that when the essence of conceptual thoughts is recognized, it is dharmakāya, and that when the essences of the five poisons are recognized, they are the five pristine wisdoms.

(c). **Teaching That, to Progress Through the Grounds and Paths, It is Necessary to Stop the Continuity of the Winds**

The profound texts of secret mantra teach that, in order to attain dharmakāya by exhausting the defilements, it is necessary to stop the continuity of the winds, **by meditation included within the [relative] truth of the path.**¹⁸⁶⁷ The *Chapter on Pristine Wisdom* in the *Kālacakra Tantra* says:

When the life and downward-voiding winds cease, energized from the melting of the HAM at the crown center, [the moon] with its rabbit image; the Prajñā Consort takes on the form of the sun.¹⁸⁶⁸

When the vajra, **great bliss**, is totally awakened by the lotus, **empty form**; again, this **moon, HAM**, is melted by the form of **an A**,¹⁸⁶⁹ the sun as a tongue of flame, **called the “fierce lady,” tummo.**¹⁸⁷⁰

When wind and moon, **semen or the male essential drops, and sun, menstrual blood, or the female essential drops**, cease,¹⁸⁷¹ consciousness and pristine wisdom are unified.¹⁸⁷²

Thus, **as these winds cease, empty form is seen**, and thus, **tummo fire melts the HAM**; and likewise thus, the **[dualistic] moon and sun of consciousness cease**. By their becoming a third, [alternative] aspect, **sugatagarbha is attained**, and no other **means of doing this** exists.

The end of the empty sky of the new moon day, or when the sun and moon are eaten **by [the planet] Rāhu [in an eclipse,] or** when there is [twilight that is] neither day or night, **that is like** the session borders,¹⁸⁷³ when in the center of the bodies of yogins,¹⁸⁷⁴ at all [such] times, they abide in the level of **deathless** amṛita.

When the [moon] periods are exhausted,¹⁸⁷⁵ as the moon, abiding in space,¹⁸⁷⁶ becomes of equal taste with the form of the sun, so, it is explained that, when the life and downward-voiding winds are exhausted, the **sun and moon**¹⁸⁷⁷ cease in the body, at the time of accomplishment.¹⁸⁷⁸

Thus, the movement of the moon and sun deteriorate,¹⁸⁷⁹ and, in both the **right and left** paths, the great life-wind ceases.

The water-born [lotus] totally awakens the vajra¹⁸⁸⁰ that is,¹⁸⁸¹ melts the rabbit-imaged [moon],¹⁸⁸² which totally enters into the great, **empty** form of the [fiery] sun at the navel.

With the luminosity of real and unreal becoming one,¹⁸⁸³ **the great bliss** abiding within **the phenomena** of the three realms¹⁸⁸⁴ is well realized **by self-awareness**.

At that time, the yogin goes to the supreme, ‘other,’ or the level beyond the [dualistic relative], sugatagarbha, without any duality¹⁸⁸⁵ at all.

At that time, the ten wrathful ones, five buddhas, with the six vajrā goddesses, like Rasavajrā, and the bodhisattvas like Kṣitigarbha, having very joyful minds, manifest in space to the yogin at this time of establishing mahāmudrā.

The supreme siddhi desired by that yogin, is attained on the rabbit-marked moon’s day of fullness, between midnight and dawn.¹⁸⁸⁶

A rain of jewels of flowers falls on the earth at this temporal conjunction, this time of attainment, when [the] time [of saṃsāric suffering] has ceased.

The body of supreme sugatagarbha becomes totally, lucidly clear, [as luminous light] devoid of atoms,¹⁸⁸⁷ with the major and minor marks in perfection that is like space.

The variety of the ‘other’ three worlds, lucidly clear, is completely free from obscurations, appearing like a dream, [as it really is.]

Speech that teaches the Dharma has no partial limitation of language, and in limitlessly many other languages of beings, it enters into the hearts of others.¹⁸⁸⁸

Mind is filled with holy bliss, never moving at all, embraced by innate great bliss at all times....

The especially exalted bodhisattva commentaries also teach extensively how the twelve bodhisattva levels are attained 1) by stopping the winds, so that the four māras, and twelve links of interdependent arising are stopped, 2) by stopping the 21,600 transitional instants, [corresponding to the breaths of one day,] so that they are perfected as 21,600 instants of bliss without transition.¹⁸⁸⁹

Also, the glorious *Guhyasamāja Tantra* says:

Regarding the winds, stopping all of them,
Purely and truly knowing, I will [now] explain.

And:

As for the two winds of conceptuality,¹⁸⁹⁰
We go forward by their elimination.¹⁸⁹¹
When the great wind of non-conceptuality¹⁸⁹²
Has been resolved as the vajras of body, speech, and mind,
Non-conceptual bliss is then bestowed,
Which is attained by¹⁸⁹³ the suchness of [secret] mantra.

Also, the *Vajra Garland Tantra* says:

Through knowing the characteristics of the winds
By application of vajra repetition,¹⁸⁹⁴

The winds of conceptuality are cut off.
 Observation of [true] mind is attained.
 By the details of self-blessing **with true selfhood**,
 Attainment of the eight siddhis is established.

Also, glorious Saraha says:

To look without closing the eyes,
 Not thinking, and stopping the winds
 Are taught by the holy guru.

There, and so forth, it is extensively taught in many texts that we must stop the winds to stop the continuity of what is to be abandoned. However, fearing it would take too many words I have not taught this extensively here.¹⁸⁹⁵

(d). **How, by Stopping the Winds, the Ultimate Profound Transformation is Attained**

When incidental defilements are stopped by stopping the winds, that does not stop absolute sugatagarbha, because ultimate transformation [of the incidental into aspects of absolute sugatagarbha] is attained. In that **ultimate transformation**, no incidental defilements at all appear in the changeless essence, and so suchness alone appears. The *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

What is worthless and whatever is worthwhile
 [Respectively,] do not and do appear.
 That is called “transforming into ‘other,’”
 Enjoying all we desire in liberation.

Vasubandhu’s commentary says:

Unfulfilling characteristics no longer appear, but fulfilling suchness [now does] appear. This is known to be a transformation [of ordinary experience] into something else [that is absolutely extraordinary.] Here **defilements** do not appear, and [suchness] does appear, **respectively**. That **transformation** is known as “liberation.”

Discrimination of Dharmas and Dharmatā says:

By entering into this essence,¹⁸⁹⁶
 There is undefiled suchness,
 As incidental defilements
 And suchness, **respectively**,
 Do not and do appear.

Incidental defilements disappearing and suchness [newly] appearing is the essence of this transformation. *Discrimination of the Middle and the Extremes* says:

It is maintained to be pure through purification,
 Like the elements of water, gold, and space.

The commentary says:

Here, the meaning of “purification” or “transformation” is separation from incidental defilements. [When this occurs,] the essence, suchness, does not change into anything else.

Thus, “ultimate transformation” means that the changeless nature goes from being [incidentally] defiled to [incidentally] undefiled, like a cloudy sky becoming cloudless. Some say that the self-perpetuating skandhas [literally] turn into the victorious ones of the five families, the five elements [literally] become their consorts, and so forth. However, maintaining that their [relative] essences are transformed into something else that newly arises [within the absolute] is incompatible with [changeless], uncompounded dharmatā. Ultimate deities, mantras, tantras, and maṇḍalas are all [aspects of] uncompounded dharmatā. Whether the form kāyas of the buddhas come into the world or not, they always abide changelessly as perfectly established reality. The *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

The ever-inexpressible nature, only without [conceptualized] proliferation,
That which supports confusion, though always free from duality [in itself],
Is also the undefiled nature that is purified of [incidental] knowables that are abandoned,
Then said to be pure of incidental defilements, like space, gold, and water that are pure,¹⁸⁹⁷

[Though this passage is primarily about the ultimate nature,] these words also teach [the relationships of the three natures:] 1) the imagined, appearance of duality [within ultimate reality] that is always free from dualism, needs to be known [as mere confusion];¹⁸⁹⁸ 2) the dependent, the support of confusion,¹⁸⁹⁹ needs to be abandoned; and 3) the perfectly established, the pure nature without [conceptualized] proliferations, is the ground [that needs to be] purified of defilements [of 1. and 2.].¹⁹⁰⁰

It is taught by the three examples of space, and so forth, that, when the fruition free from defilements is attained, “transformation” [of changeable, relative experience into realization of the changeless, absolute essence] is attained.

Objection: Since water and gold are compounded, they are not suitable examples of a changeless nature.

Answer: These two do indeed change every moment, but they are not used as examples of that aspect. The intention is the continuity of their unchanging relative [essences], whether or not they have [incidental] defilements. Therefore, there is no fault. As the *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says further:

As when water is clarified by removing mud,

That clear substance itself is not produced by cleansing.
It has only been purified of defilements.
The way the mind is purified is similar.

Mind is said to be ever-luminous in its nature.
However, it is flawed by incidental faults.
Any other mind than the mind of dharmatā,
Is said not to be luminous in its intrinsic nature.

[Vasubandhu's] commentary says:

As water that is by nature pure¹⁹⁰¹ may be incidentally muddied,
mind that is naturally luminous may be flawed by incidental faults.
Dependent minds other than the absolute mind that is dharmatā are
not called "luminous." Therefore, it should be understood that
"naturally luminous mind" refers only to the mind of dharmatā.¹⁹⁰²

Objection: If naturally luminous mind can be flawed by incidental faults,
doesn't that contradict its being uncompounded, hard like vajra,
uncuttable, indestructible, truly existing, firm, stable, and so forth.

Answer: There is no fault, because incidental flaws cannot harm the
naturally luminous essence of mind. These words are taught with the
intention that [ultimate] mind's flaws hinder only its manifestation. The
Sublime Continuum teaches extensively how "Luminosity is not produced,"
"luminosity is not afflicted by incidental defilements," and so forth.

(e). **Teaching That, at the Time of Attainment, Defilements to be
Purified are Exhausted; but [Sugata]garbha That is the
Ground of Purification is not Exhausted**

It is taught how sugatagarbha itself is not exhausted, when its incidental
defilements are exhausted, using the examples of a rotting tree, an
extinguished lamp, cooling red-hot iron, the phases of the moon, and so
forth.

There is indeed a dissimilarity between example and exemplified as to
whether they are beyond the instantaneous or not. However, they are
not used as examples of that aspect. Another aspect analogous [to the
exemplified] is used. The *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* says:

Blessed One, for example, outside of a great city, in a grove of sāla
trees, was one tree that grew earlier to an age of one hundred
years. At that time, the owner of the grove worked on it and
watered it from time to time. Eventually, the bark of that tree
rotted; its bark, leaves, and branches fell to the ground. Only the
inner heart remained.

A tathāgata is also like that. Whatever rotten parts there are, **like
defiled [relative] phenomena**, are exhausted. Only genuine
[absolute] phenomena remain.

Also:

Child of noble family, it is like this, for example: A man or woman sets up a lamp, filling its great or small vessel with oil. As long as there is oil [in the lamp], there is light. When the oil is gone, the light is also non-existent. Though the exhausted light becomes non-existent, the vessel that is the lamp does not become non-existent.

The light becoming non-existent is like the afflictive emotions being exhausted. The Tathāgata is also like that. His exhausted afflictive emotions become non-existent, but he exists eternally as dharmakāya.

And:

Ordinary people think that a tathāgata is exhausted in pure and true cessation. A tathāgata is not ultimately exhausted. He should be known to have the qualities of eternal existence, changelessness, and non-transition. Child of noble family, “great nirvāṇa” is the [eternal] dharmadhātu of the blessed ones.

Also, the translation of Devacandra says:

Just as the fire in [red-hot] iron cools, [but the iron itself remains;] likewise, after exhausting the afflictive emotions accumulated for many countless tens of millions of eons, a tathāgata, remains as permanent, stable, everlasting dharmakāya.

The *Brief Teaching of Empowerments* says:

As in successive risings of the moon,¹⁹⁰³
 Its **fifteen different** phases become complete,¹⁹⁰⁴
 And the shadow's diminishing also is complete,¹⁹⁰⁵
 Yet the moon becomes neither nothingness or complete;¹⁹⁰⁶
 So, in successive stages of pristine wisdom,¹⁹⁰⁷
 The levels [of the path] become complete,¹⁹⁰⁸
 And afflictions, and so forth, are completely diminished.¹⁹⁰⁹
 Yet wisdom becomes neither nothingness¹⁹¹⁰ or complete.¹⁹¹¹

By the many examples of the essence and its defilements taught there, and so forth, and those previously taught here as well; you should understand that when transformation [into the ultimate] is attained, after all defilements are exhausted; sugatagarbha always abides inexhaustibly as the profound ultimate essence that remains.

(f). **Teaching That, from the Examples of What is Exhausted and Not Exhausted, Space is Supreme**

Space is the best of these examples, since [even the example] transcends the momentary, and is partless, omnipresent, all-pervading, and so forth. The *Great Drum Sūtra* says:

Such and such a building or mountain that depends on space may be destroyed, but space itself is never destroyed. It is similar with

the dhātu of nirvāṇa that pervades all sentient beings.

You should also recall all the earlier quotes concerned with the example of space, like “As when a vase is broken,...”

(g). **Teaching How Establishing That the Ground of Purification is Not Exhausted Also Refutes Assertions That the Continuity of Pristine Wisdom is Broken**

These scriptures refute assertions that 1) the ultimate Buddha is not established; 2) the continuity of pristine wisdom is broken; and 3) by exhausting what is to be purified from it, the ground of purification is also exhausted.

(h). **Teaching That Deluded Appearances do Not Arise Within Pristine Wisdom, Where Delusion has Been Exhausted**

Maintaining that that phenomena of the incidental three realms appear to pristine wisdom that has exhausted delusion is unreasonable. The incidental three realms are deluded appearances. Deluded appearances are not possible when delusion has been exhausted. Āryadeva says:

Deluded that the existent ¹⁹¹² is non-existent and that it is impermanent,¹⁹¹³

Deluded that the non-existent¹⁹¹⁴ is existent and that it is permanent,

Those deluded by deluded **views** are deceived, and generate further delusion.¹⁹¹⁵

Through deluded minds, beings are deluded about true reality.

Delusion concerning causes¹⁹¹⁶ has fruits of delusion within the three lower realms.

The same master’s *Establishing Reasons that Reverse Delusion* says:

Through the power of delusion, there is delusion about pure and true reality, like thinking that everything is permanent.

Regarding being born as a hungry ghost through such delusion, it says there:

With mouths like a needle’s eye, and throats like a hair of a horse-tail,

They have bellies as big as a mountain, but arms and legs like chopsticks,

[With joints] like squeaky chariots infused with smoke.

Viewing pleasant food and drink arrayed before them,

When they reach for it with their hands, [and try to take it,]

They see terrifying persons, all arrayed in armor,

Brandishing sharp weapons and [heavy wooden] staves,

[Threatening to] strike and beat them into¹⁹¹⁷ dust,

They have no power to take it¹⁹¹⁸ and are tormented by hunger.

When some of them can put food and drink into their mouths,
 Tongues of flame blaze up, and their **mouths and bodies** are burned.
 Some, not finding even foul-smelling blood and pus,
 Resort to sucking it out from [within] their own bodies.
 Some who do not see or even hear of food and drink,
 Frantically rush about in [all] the ten directions.

And, **regarding suffering in hell by the power of delusion:**

Until the ripening of evil deeds has been exhausted,
However often these beings are killed, they cannot die.
 If seeing **such forms** in a painting, hearing them told, or reading
 about them
 Inspires great terror, why mention the actual experience?
 All of the¹⁹¹⁹ pain in all the world realms gathered in one
 Do not rival even a hundred thousandth part
Of the sufferings experienced [by the beings] in hell.
 All of these [beings' sufferings] have risen from ignorance,
 Due to which they hallucinate the three-fold lower realms.

The same master's *Treatise as Long as a Forearm*¹⁹²⁰ says:

Therefore, the capable analyze what is mere delusion
 As not being pure and true reality.¹⁹²¹
 Since **the effect of the cause of** confusion is untrue,
 What appears **as the three realms** is not really like that.¹⁹²²

Since appearance that is not real **is delusive appearance**,
 How could the nature of such appearance have reality?¹⁹²³
 An understanding of what there is in fine detail
 Knows that everything is merely imputation.¹⁹²⁴

The wise abandon conceptions that desire and such are happiness
 As they would a [poisonous] snake inspiring terror....

There, and so forth, it is taught that the three realms are mere imaginary
 imputations that are delusions arisen from ignorance, as Nāgārjuna's *Sixty
 Stanzas on Reasoning* also teaches:

Since the perfect Buddha taught,
 "These worlds are conditioned by ignorance,"
 Why is it not correct
 That these worlds are [mere] conception?

When ignorance has ceased,
 As things that arise cease too,
 How can it not be clear
 That these **worlds** are imputed by ignorance?

Because these worlds are [merely] delusive appearances imputed by
 ignorance, it is incorrect to say that these delusions appear within pristine
 wisdom, where ignorant imputations have been exhausted. This is like its

being incorrect to say that [illusions of] falling hairs, and [white] conches being [seen as] yellow occur for those with faultless eyes. Āryadeva's *Middle Way that Conquers Delusion* says:

When the eye of understanding opens, like waking up to freedom from habitual tendencies of ignorance; at that time, the undefiled pristine wisdom of a sugata arises. Nothing at all is seen¹⁹²⁵ of the **three worlds**, because there is no essence of [relative] real things to observe.

And:

When the sun of pristine wisdom of the pure and true has arisen, so that emptiness, marklessness, and wishlessness are known; all the afflictive emotions joined to habitual propensities of ignorance are cleared away. Identifying mind and mental factors, along with their [dualistic] sphere of activity, are no longer seen and observed as real things and their essences. This is so, because when unsurpassable pristine wisdom arises, the great release has been attained.

Thus, it is taught by reasoning that all relative phenomena are like dreams, illusory hairs falling before the eyes, and optical illusions. These **relative** things are non-existent in the absolute. Instead, there is [absolute] luminosity that does not appear **to consciousness**.

The same freedom from conceptualized proliferation that is established by reasoning is also taught by scripture. The master Nāgārjuna says:

As in eyes free from dimness of vision
 Pure, without defilement,
 No hairs, double moons, or insects
 Or peacock feathers appear;

 To the undefiled eyes of the wise,
 Free from dim obscurations
 Of afflictive emotions and knowables,
 There is no [false] appearance at all.¹⁹²⁶

 As by falling asleep, for example,
 Children, women, and palaces,
 Vistas, and so forth, are seen,
 But on waking are seen no more;

 So, knowing **and** things in the relative,
 When the eyes of awareness are opened,
 Free from the sleep of unknowing,
 Are there to be seen no more.

 For example, in a dark night,
 As unreal spirits are seen,
 But when the sun opens the eyes,
 They are nowhere to be seen;

When those who are wise overcome
 All habitual seeds of ignorance,
 Due to the sun of knowledge,
 They no longer see mind and its factors.¹⁹²⁷

When we awaken from sleep, the appearances of dream vanish. When we are free from defects of the eyes, appearances of hairs before the eyes disappear. So, when we wake from the sleep of ignorance, into pristine wisdom that is free from the dim perception of [identifying] mind, mental factors, and consciousness, with the [resulting perceptions of] objects – all the phenomena of the three realms – no longer appear at all. These and their seeds cease and subside into exhaustion. The *Seventy Verses on Refuge* says:

For mind in the sleep of ignorance,
 This and that appearance to beings
 Are said to be false like dreams.

When that ignorant sleep is broken,
 By the truth of pure wisdom arising,
 Like people awakened from sleep,
 Those who awaken are buddhas.

(i). **Teaching How, by Just [Absence of Saṃsāric Appearances], There Will be no Faults of Nihilism**

By just [this absence of saṃsāric appearances], there is no fault of nihilism, because as Bhāvaviveka's *Precious Lamp of the Middle Way* says:

Although nothing **relative** at all [appears] before non-conceptual pristine wisdom, also called “the prajñā of the absolute,” there is the mind of enlightened dharmatā and “the great self-arising pristine wisdom.” Therefore, we are not nihilists.

That is true because, although we proclaim that incidental defilements of the [relative] three realms are exhausted, we do not proclaim that the ‘other’ three realms of sugatagarbha are exhausted.

(j). **Teaching That There is No Contradiction Between Delusion That is Exhausted Not Appearing and Delusion That is Not Exhausted Appearing**

It is not contradictory that these appearances of the three realms are exhausted for those who have attained dharmatā, but that they [still] appear for those who have not yet exhausted them by attaining dharmatā. This is like the same white conch appearing as white to a [normal] individual and yellow [to one afflicted by jaundice]. Vasubandhu's *Principles of Explanation* says:

Because of awakening from the sleep of ignorance,
 And because of expanding understanding of knowables,...

There it says that these ignorant appearances of the three realms do not appear to pristine wisdom that has awakened from the sleep of ignorance. [Ordinary appearances are appearances of ignorance,] because the three realms are appearances within ignorant consciousness. [Vasubandhu's] *Extensive Commentary on the Sūtra of the Perfection of Prajñā in One Hundred Thousand Stanzas* says:

Here, "like a dream," means that just as phenomena seen in a dream no longer appear when we awaken from sleep; imagined phenomena, like those of the self-perpetuating five skandhas, no longer appear when we awaken from the sleep of ignorance. When we attain the prajñā of the noble ones, ignorant appearances are abandoned.

These words teach that, as appearances that arise in dreams when we are asleep subside when we wake up, dream-like appearances of the three realms no longer appear when pristine wisdom awakens from the sleep of ignorance. The same text also says:

Regarding, "all phenomena," there are two kinds of phenomena, 1) entirely imputed and 2) perfectly established. Entirely imputed phenomena are those included within the three realms and the three times.

There it is taught again and again that all of the [phenomena of the] three realms and the three times are entirely imputed. The same author's *Commentary On the extensive and Middle-Length Mothers*, and so forth, says:

The realms of desire, form, and the formless, are fully known not to be genuine and to have entirely arisen from imputation.

And:

Form is without appearance. Why? Entirely imputed form is non-existent like the horns of a rabbit.

And:

The completely pure prajñā of a tathāgata does not see phenomena of mind, mental factors, attached desire, phenomena accompanying attached desire, and so forth. That is because such entirely imputed phenomena are utterly non-existent.

The entirely imputed three realms are forever non-existent in the way things are, like the horns of a rabbit. They do not appear in awareness of the way things are, any more than the horns of a rabbit appear in ordinary, non-deluded awareness. As Śāntideva's *Entering into the Practice of a Bodhisattva* says:

When neither things or non-things
Abide before the mind,
Since there are no other aspects,

Not observed, they are pacified.¹⁹²⁸

These words teach that the [relative] real things of the three realms are totally pacified within pristine wisdom of the ultimate.

(k). **Teaching That What Appears to Pristine Wisdom Does Not Appear to Consciousness and What Appears to Consciousness Does Not Appear to Pristine Wisdom**

Discrimination of Dharmas and Dharmatā says:

What appears there¹⁹²⁹ does not appear to dharmatā,
And what does not appear there, appears to dharmatā.

That is so because awareness of apparent, [relative] dharmas does not appear within dharmatā, and [relative] dharmas themselves do not appear in awareness of the appearances of dharmatā. If the dharmas of the three realms appeared within self-arising pristine wisdom, and absolute dharmatā failed to appear, that would be totally ludicrous. If pristine wisdom saw these [relative] real things of the three realms, its seeing would be deluded. **The noble one Nāgārjuna's *Stages of Meditation on the Middle Way***, denies that this occurs:

Noble ones do not see delusions.

Also:

Things as they abide
Are experienced by the noble ones.
Not appearing to the child-like,
Things so appear to the wise.¹⁹³⁰

The appearances of child-like ordinary beings and supremely wise noble ones are not the same, but different. Also, the *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

To the child-like who are obscured from the real,
What is unreal in every way appears.
To bodhisattvas who have cleared this away,¹⁹³¹
What is real in every way appears.

Also:

What is worthless and whatever is worthwhile¹⁹³²
Respectively do not and do appear.¹⁹³³

These three realms that appear to consciousness are actually non-existent. They are not pure and true reality. However, the absolute dharmatā that appears to pristine wisdom is true and pure reality. That really exists.

(l). **If Pristine Wisdom Saw These Three Realms That are Really Non-Existent, it would Absurdly Follow that Pristine Wisdom did Not See Dharmatā Abiding as Real**

The *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* also says:

What kind of darkness **is** this--where what exists¹⁹³⁴
Is not seen, and the non-existent¹⁹³⁵ is seen?¹⁹³⁶

And:

For beings, though anything other¹⁹³⁷ than that does not exist,
All beings, without remainder, with completely deluded minds,
Attached to non-existence,¹⁹³⁸ completely abandon existence.¹⁹³⁹
How grave and dire is this aspect of the world's delusion!

Consciousness cannot see truly existent dharmatā, but sees the non-existent phenomena of the three worlds instead. Consciousness is like [delusive] darkness. Its delusions are very grave and serious. For buddhas in whom [delusion] has ceased, appearances of [delusive] consciousness have also ceased. That statement is self-established. Also, the *Buddhāvataṃsaka Sūtra* says:

Experiencing conceptuality,
The eye is extremely deluded.¹⁹⁴⁰
What is seen by delusion is error.
The buddhas have no error.

Here, appearance of the three realms is taught as error and non-appearance of the three realms is taught as non-error. Also, Nāgārjuna's *Praise of Dharmadhātu* says:

Without the six objects¹⁹⁴¹ appearing,
The real is known as it is.

Pristine wisdom perceives the pure and true ultimate. Its insight has no appearances of the six [dualistic] objects of the relative senses. **Master Kamalaśīla's Illumination of Suchness of the Middle Way** says:

When appearance of wisdom arises
These¹⁹⁴² are abandoned like darkness.

And:

If **deluded appearance** is not abandoned there is error.
By its abandonment, we are endowed with [true] yoga.¹⁹⁴³

And:

The producer of delusion is like a magician.

[On the other hand,] by purifying delusion, these erroneous phenomena of the three worlds that are like darkness no longer appear.

- (m). **If These Three Realms That do not Transcend Consciousness Appear to Pristine Wisdom, it Would Follow Absurdly that Pristine Wisdom does not Perceive the Real**

From well-proclaiming “These three realms are only consciousness,” it is also established that the three realms do not appear in pristine wisdom that is beyond consciousness.

- (n). **If These Three Realms That are Not Real Appear to Pristine Wisdom, it Would Absurdly Follow that Pristine Wisdom Does Not See the Real**

If these **three realms** appeared to **self-arising pristine wisdom**, pristine wisdom would bind us, as a cause of all-pervading affliction. Buddhapālita’s *Commentary on Root verses on the Middle Way* says:

Those who see the unreal are bound by that.¹⁹⁴⁴
Those who see the real are liberated.

Discrimination of Dharmas and Dharmatā says:

The characteristics of [relative] phenomena
Are duality,¹⁹⁴⁵ accord with verbal expression,¹⁹⁴⁶
And imagined¹⁹⁴⁷ appearance of what is not pure and true.
Because they are appearance of what does not exist,
Phenomena are therefore unreality.
Since none of them have referents of real objects,
As mere conceptions, they are merely imagined.

Also:

Delusion, because the non-existent appears,
Is the cause of the omnipresent afflictive emotions.
For, as when illusory elephants appear,
What really exists there¹⁹⁴⁸ also fails to appear.¹⁹⁴⁹

With no non-existence or appearance,
Dichotomies like delusion and non-delusion,
And omnipresent affliction and purity,
Would not then be workable [any longer].¹⁹⁵⁰

And:

Examples of non-existent things appearing
Are illusions, dreams [in sleep, and so forth.]
Examples of transformations [of phenomena]
Are such things as [empty] space, gold, and water.

These passages, and so forth, teach that the three realms of the relative are delusion. Because they are unreal and delusory, the three realms are exhausted by liberation. They do not appear within pristine wisdom.

- (o). **If Suffering and the Origin of Suffering Appeared [to Pristine Wisdom], it would Absurdly Follow That the Seeds of Saṃsāra and Dualistic Appearance did not Cease Within It**

It is also taught that these three realms do not transcend the three and eight kinds of suffering. The noble one Asaṅga says in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*:

What is the truth of suffering? It is to be known by the births and birth places of sentient beings.

The cause of these [births and birth places] is taught to be the truth of the origin of suffering. It is only reasonable that appearances of these [sufferings] are exhausted in pristine wisdom that forever exhausts their seeds. As the noble one Nāgārjuna says in his *Praise of Dharmadhātu*:

When the two kinds of selflessness are seen,
the seeds of saṃsāra [will subsequently] cease.

And:

Though duality is imagined by the childish,
Yoga abides in freedom from that duality.

Dualistic phenomena and appearances cease in pristine wisdom where the seeds of saṃsāra have ceased. Since saṃsāra does not transcend dualistic phenomena, saṃsāric appearances do not appear in pristine wisdom. That is only reasonable. Extremely many other [instances of] scripture and reasoning in this style appear; but fearing it would take too many words, I have not written down all of them here. However, since some of them were taught here earlier, you should understand the excellent intention of them all [by this time.]

(p). **Eliminating Wrong Conceptions About These Points, Where the Faultless is Seen as Faulty**

1'. **Presenting a Wrong Conception that Contradicts Scripture**

Objection: If, as you say, the buddha's pristine wisdom does not know the phenomena of the three realms, doesn't that contradict the teachings of the *Extensive and Middle Length Mother*, and so forth that [pristine wisdom] knows beings' [dualistic] minds just as they are, with all their gathering in, emanation, and attached desire?

2'. **Well-Establishing Though Scripture That There is No Such Contradiction**

Answer: There is no [such] fault, because "What is known appears," is not universally true. There are innumerable cases of knowing things that do not appear. Examples are knowing past and future [events that are] separated [from the present] by many eons, and knowing the truth of non-affirming negations like that of selflessness, where [what is known] could not possibly appear, [because it never existed.]

The intention of the Mother in these teachings is that, since [beings'] minds do not exist in reality, their gathering in, emanation, and so forth, do not exist in reality either. They are excluded from reality. Knowing the gathering in, emanation, and so forth, of beings' minds means knowing that they describe what does not exist. Vasubandhu's *Commentary on those Mother Scriptures* says:

Subhūti, "The Tathāgata knows the gathering in and emanation of these beings' minds," [means that,] by seeing the [true] nature of mind, [the Tathāgata] knows that the gathering in and emanation of [beings'] minds are not reality as it is, and that they are non-existent. That is called knowing the gathering in and emanation of [beings'] minds.

And:

Knowledge of 1) the nature of the exhaustion of all sentient beings, and 2) the nature of freedom from desire, and 3) the nature of cessation, and 4) the nature of abandonment, and 5) the absence of essence is called "knowledge of [beings'] minds."

It is known from the appearance in actuality of the ground, perfectly established dharmatā, which excludes all [intrinsically separate] phenomena, that no [intrinsically separate] phenomena exist. That is called "knowing all phenomena." Seeing it like that is seeing the pure and true meaning of the great intention.¹⁹⁵¹

3'. **How These Scriptures Also Clarify the Intention of Saying "Not Seeing is Seeing"**

With the intention of knowledge of things that cannot be seen, [as just described,] the *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

Why? The knowing buddhas do not see phenomena.¹⁹⁵²

The meaning is that the buddhas know phenomena, even though they cannot [falsely] appear [to them]. Similarly, The *Condensed Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra* says:

Whoever does not see forms and does not see feelings
Does not see perceptions¹⁹⁵³ and does not see intentions,¹⁹⁵⁴
Does not see consciousness, mind, or the mental,¹⁹⁵⁵
Is a person who has seen the Dharma.¹⁹⁵⁶
That is what the Tathāgata has taught,

Sentient beings say words [like,] "Space is seen"
And analyze the meaning of how it is seen.¹⁹⁵⁷
Seeing phenomena is similar.
That is what the Tathāgata has taught.

No other examples of such seeing are found.¹⁹⁵⁸
Whoever sees like that sees all phenomena.¹⁹⁵⁹

The *Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle* says:

Not observing anything at all
Is said to be the highest observation.

The *Bodhisattva Piṭaka Sūtra* says:

What is seeing all phenomena as they are? It is like this: It is not seeing them at all.

The *Sūtra of the Exalted Compendium of True and Pure Dharma* says:

Not seeing all phenomena is true seeing.

The intention of such teachings that “not seeing is seeing” is that dharmatā, the ground of negation, is seen by not seeing the phenomena that are negated in it. By knowing “all phenomena seen from the viewpoint of delusion are not established,” all phenomena are known from the viewpoint of inconceivable reality. Master Candragomin’s *Praise of Mañjuṣa* says:

Though skilled in teaching the Dharma path, you do not see any of these phenomena. Though rejoicing in beings’ benefit, you do not observe the sentient beings themselves.

You need to be very skillful in interpreting the intention of teaching that “not seeing is seeing.” Otherwise your view will be wrong, and you will come to disparage the intention of the Buddha’s teaching.¹⁹⁶⁰

4'. **Teaching That the Way of Appearance of Those Who Have Vipāśyanā and Those Who Do Not are Not the Same**

The *Buddhāvataṃsaka Sūtra* says:

Those who see without vipāśyanā
Are seers of [only] bad phenomena.
Those who see¹⁹⁶¹ [clearly]¹⁹⁶² with vipāśyanā
Do not see any phenomena¹⁹⁶³ at all.

That says that whether there are good [and true] or bad [and false] appearances depends on whether vipāśyanā exists or not. What appears when vipāśyanā is absent does not appear to vipāśyanā. The pristine wisdom of the victorious ones is ultimate vipāśyanā. Therefore, it is established that these three realms do not appear in it, because they appear only to those without vipāśyanā.

5'. **How [the Thesis] That Phenomena Must Appear to Knowledge [to be Known] is Refuted by Absurd Consequences**

If phenomena had to appear in order to be known,¹⁹⁶⁴ there would be the absurd consequence that very many non-affirmingly negated phenomena, self, sentient beings, life, a nourisher, and so forth, as well as all phenomena far in the past and future would appear to omniscient wisdom,

because it knows them. There would also be the [opposite] absurd consequence that pristine wisdom cannot know these phenomena, because they do not appear to it.

6'. **Teaching the Ground of Such Mistakes as That Dharmatā Does Not Appear to Pristine Wisdom**

Therefore, the way things are is summarized by the teachings that 1) phenomena negated by pristine wisdom are known, even though they do not appear,¹⁹⁶⁵ and that 2) the ground of negation, dharmatā, is known because it does appear,¹⁹⁶⁶ that eliminates the assertions by some that dharmatā does not appear to pristine wisdom, and that realization of it is natural realization,¹⁹⁶⁷ because 1) it is taught again and again that dharmatā appears to pristine wisdom by many passages like, “The great illumination, the great clarity,” and by many examples like the eight kinds of divination.¹⁹⁶⁸ 2) Dharmatā as the ground of emptiness [or negation] is affirmingly negated. It is not merely non-affirmingly negated as empty of itself.

These mistakes come from the wrong view that maintains “dharmatā and self-emptiness are synonymous.” The same is true for maintaining “there are no affirmatively established phenomena in the way things are.” What is empty of itself is non-affirmingly negated. Therefore, if all phenomena are empty of themselves, “there are established phenomena”¹⁹⁶⁹ would have to be rejected.¹⁹⁷⁰

7'. **How Other Wrong Conceptions are Eliminated by Teaching What Exists in Reality**

For the ultimate pristine wisdom that sees the absolute, 1) knowing that dharmatā exists **as the fundamental way things are** is **validly cognized** experiential realization of reality; 2) knowing that relative phenomena are non-existent **in the fundamental way things are** is a **validly cognized** natural realization.¹⁹⁷¹

Extremely many teachings by glorious gurus, like a victorious ocean of Dharma, say that exponents of “there is no natural realization” are only emanations of darkness. *Dharmakīrti’s Commentary on Valid Cognition* says:

In experiencing the first moment of observation, one thinks, “This is observed,” [That is identifying mind.] Then the conceptual conclusion “the [opposite quality of this] is not observed” arises [in the mental sense].¹⁹⁷²

Also:

After we have experience of a particular nature,¹⁹⁷³
We eliminate others, [thinking,] “It is not that other,
Therefore, that [other quality] is not being observed,”
From that, there is observation of having a difference.

That is, after the correct ground of negation appears [in the mental sense], it is explicitly realized [within mental experience], hence naturally understood, that the negated phenomenon is absent in what is observed.¹⁹⁷⁴ Saying that the second and later moments of [perceiving an object by] the pristine wisdom of the victorious ones is not valid cognition is similarly [mistaken].¹⁹⁷⁵

That “dharmatā exists in the **fundamental** way things are” and that “[relative] phenomena do not [exist in the fundamental way things are]” are taught in many especially exalted texts of the correct tradition like Discrimination of Dharmas and Dharmatā. Similarly, 1) the absolute exists and the relative does not; 2) **great** nirvāṇa exists and saṃsāra does not; 3) [phenomena of] the **absolute** truth of cessation exist, and [phenomena of] the other three [noble truths] do not;¹⁹⁷⁶ 4) [phenomena of] the perfectly established, dharmatā, exist, and [phenomena of] the other¹⁹⁷⁷ [two] natures do not; 5) [phenomena of] suchness exist, but other phenomena do not; and 6) the supreme ‘other,’ sugatagarbha, exists, but incidental defilements that constitute the outer and inner do not.

If you know the intention of the extensive teachings about phenomena that exist and do not exist in the **fundamental** reality of the way things are, you will know well how to distinguish phenomena that are existent and non-existent.

8'. **Eliminating Mistaken Wrong Conceptions that Scripture Refutes What it Does Not**

Objection: If, as you say, the three realms do not appear in the pristine wisdom of the victorious ones, doesn't that contradict **the Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle**:

As one ray sent forth by the sun
Shines on all sentient beings,
The buddhas' wisdom shines
On all objects of knowledge at once.

Answer: There is no fault because 1) that was taught with the intention that the buddhas know all knowable phenomena at once, [whether they appear or not;] 2) the text says that the pristine wisdom of the victorious ones shines on all objects at once,¹⁹⁷⁸ but does not teach that all knowables appear within that pristine wisdom; 3) “The Shining” here is just part of the metaphor of the sun and its form; and 4) as previously established, [absolute] dharmatā is known through its appearance, but [relative] phenomena are known through their non-appearance and non-existence,¹⁹⁷⁹ and this is the sense in which phenomena are known [as they are.]

9'. **Thus, There Would be Absurd Consequences if Phenomena Appeared to Buddhas as They Do to Sentient Beings**

If that were not so, and the three realms appeared in the pristine wisdom of the buddhas, as they do to sentient beings; since it is taught that one thing appears as many different things, to many kinds of sentient beings with dissimilar karma; all of these [different illusory appearances] would accordingly have to appear in the pristine wisdom of the victorious ones as well. Asaṅga's *Summary of the Great Vehicle* says:

For Hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals,
And gods, according to their families,
Because one thing is different in their minds,...

And the *Kālacakra* says:

Wish-fulfilling trees powerful food, supremely powerful food,
medicines, the lord of tastes,¹⁹⁸⁰ and the other things, and what is
produced by particles that ravish disease, are not seen by sentient
beings on the earth, **as they are by gods**. [On earth] they see
ordinary grass and trees, water and dust, and stones and iron.
Hungry ghosts **see** water as great fires, and those who have gone to
hell see everything as cutting, piercing, and so forth.¹⁹⁸¹

10'. **Therefore, These Karmic Appearances of the Three Realms are Not Established in the Way Things Are, Even as Mere Appearances**

The deluded karmic appearances of sentient beings are the private phenomena of those sentient beings themselves. Their appearance in the **fundamental** way things are is forever impossible, like the horns of a rabbit, the child of a barren woman, and a flower in the sky. Appearances from the viewpoint of delusion are not established within the **fundamental** way things are, even as mere appearances.¹⁹⁸² Therefore, they are definitely not workable as appearances of the way things are. With the intention of these points, it is taught in many ways, again and again, that all [relative] phenomena are unobserved, non-existent, unobservable, and so forth.

11'. **Teaching That it is Not Contradictory that Though These Appearances do Not Appear in the Way Things Are, They Appear in the Way of Delusion**

Objection: Śantideva says in *Entering into the Conduct of a Bodhisattva*:

How things are seen, heard, and known
Is not what should be negated.
Reverse what causes suffering,
Conceptions that these are true.

You contradict his dictum that appearances of grasper and grasped are not to be refuted.

Answer: There is no fault because 1) appearances [of grasper and grasped] do not truly exist in the **fundamental** way things are, but it is not contradictory that they appear from the viewpoint of delusion. Śāntideva means that we should not criticize [assertions] that grasper and grasped appear in the relative.¹⁹⁸³ He is not saying that grasper and grasped appear in awareness of the way things are. 2) We too do not maintain that deluded appearances cease before delusion ceases.

12'. **Teaching That Whatever Appears in the Insight of Meditation is Absolute**

That a phenomenon is known by the pristine wisdom of the victorious ones does not entail that such a phenomenon must appear in that pristine wisdom. Aśaṅga says in the *Summary of the Great Vehicle*:

In the non-conceptual movement of pristine wisdom,
Since there are no [conceptual] objects that appear,
It should be understood that [such] objects do not exist.
Since they do not exist, mental knowing does not exist.

Otherwise the absurd dilemma would follow that either pristine wisdom does not know [conceptualized] objects,¹⁹⁸⁵ or [conceptualized] objects appear within pristine wisdom. [If they appear there, relative] real things would be the suchness of dharmatā, because they appear in the ultimate insight of meditation.

13'. **Teaching That Absence of the Occasion of Meditation is Impossible for Buddhas**

Objection: Though relative objects do not appear in the pristine wisdom of the meditation of the victorious ones, they do appear in their pristine wisdom of subsequent attainment.¹⁹⁸⁶

Answer: Pristine wisdom [without objects indeed] occurs only in meditation. However, when the *Scriptures on Monastic Discipline* say: “An elephant rises and is established in meditation.” those words teach that the buddhas are always in meditation. Āryadeva says:

Buddhas at all times
Are meditating on suchness.
They do not enter or leave
That inexpressible state.

How could later attainment
Be like pristine wisdom?
How would buddhas in later attainment
Be better than those on the levels?¹⁹⁸⁷

Therefore, the pristine wisdom of the buddhas is always in [a state of] meditation.¹⁹⁸⁸

Objection: That contradicts teachings like, “[The Buddha] arose from purely and truly resting inwardly,” and “[The Buddha] arose from that meditative absorption.”

Answer: All such occasions are mere displays. The buddhas indeed show appearances of arising from meditative absorption, but meditation is never absent in the Buddhas’ minds. That is because the buddhas are pristine wisdom in which 1) the [relative] all ground consciousness together with its seeds is forever exhausted, 2) the continuity of all winds has been forever stopped, and 3) the two obscurations with their seeds have been forever exhausted.

Therefore, you need to be skillful regarding the intention of that and other such passages, [attributing] subsequent attainment [to buddhas].¹⁹⁸⁹

c. **Homage and Summary [of the Section on Fruition]**

Now, there is a summary with praise and homage to these same buddhas.

The Kālacakra Subsequent Tantra says:

That which is the “pure and true” ultimate, absolute truth, collections of white virtue, is the conquerors’ dharmakāya;¹⁹⁹⁰ And coming from Dharma,¹⁹⁹¹ is the complete enjoyment body,¹⁹⁹² the collection of all languages; the set of the major and minor marks, and nirmāṇakāya; supreme changeless bliss; and *svābhavikakāya*, which are therefore not dharmakāya.¹⁹⁹³

The characteristics of these **four** kāyas **taught** by the sugata, the noble Nāgārjuna, and the Tibetans:

Dharmadhātu, the ground of great, abundant benefit to self and others, is not a single **aspect**, and also is not many **essences**. Not a non-thing, not a thing, it **is a third alternative**, with an equal taste, like space, having a nature hard to realize **by consciousness**. Not covered **by defilements**, changeless essence,¹⁹⁹⁴ pervading unequal and equal [alike],¹⁹⁹⁵ it totally lacks proliferation. Known by the discriminating pristine wisdom of self-awareness, I prostrate to the unexampled¹⁹⁹⁶ dharmakāya of the victorious ones.

That which is world-transcending, inconceivable, with hundreds of well-created¹⁹⁹⁷ natures of the fruition, expanding various great¹⁹⁹⁸ aspects, a cause of joy for intelligent ones in the retinue, proliferating continuously in all the world vast sounds of the holy Dharma; I prostrate to this sambhogakāya of the buddhas, abiding as the kingdom of the Dharma.

Emanations for the sake of ripening beings appearing for some,¹⁹⁹⁹ blazing like fire, that which **turns** the wheel of Dharma of perfect enlightenment, for some,²⁰⁰⁰ again, teaching the total peace **of nirvāṇa**, ravishing away the fear of the three realms, by way of various means engaging in many aspects **of benefit for others**; I prostrate to the nirmāṇakāya of the sages, great benefits going to

the ten directions.

The above praise of the three kāyas was taught by Nāgārjuna.

Liberating from the activities of the three worlds, abiding with vastness equal to space, having the nature of all the aspects of all things, primordial, complete purity, peace, complete solitude, nature of supreme peace, realized by the pristine wisdom of yogins, hard to realize by consciousness, hard to analyze, benefitting self and others, pervading the animate and inanimate, having no characteristics, primordially free from concepts, kāya unique, because it is without example; I prostrate to the kāya of great bliss of the victorious ones, in which the unequal, prajñā, and the equal, skillful means, are inseparable.

The above praise to svābhavikakāya was taught by the Buddha himself.

The Ornament of the Sūtras of the Great Vehicle says:

The one²⁰⁰¹ with love for beings, without near and far,
Having the intention of joining and separating,²⁰⁰²
Having the intention of inseparability²⁰⁰³
I prostrate to you who intend this happiness and benefit.²⁰⁰⁴

O Sage who is truly²⁰⁰⁵ liberated from all obscurations,
Overcoming all worlds with your magnificence,²⁰⁰⁶
Pervading all that is knowable with your knowledge,²⁰⁰⁷
Liberating the mind by that, to you I prostrate.

You²⁰⁰⁸ who are the tamer of all the afflictive emotions
Of all sentient beings, without [the least] remainder,
Overcoming with antidotes, for those who have produced them,
[All of their] afflictive emotions, to you I prostrate.

Self-existing, without possessing desire,²⁰⁰⁹
Unobstructed from knowing all knowables,
Always [resting] in meditative equality,
Answering every question, to you I prostrate.

With support²⁰¹⁰ and supported²⁰¹¹ that are to be explained,
And speech²⁰¹² and knowledge²⁰¹³ that are the means of explaining,
Always having an unobstructed grasp,²⁰¹⁴
Hence an excellent teacher, to you I prostrate.

Having gone,²⁰¹⁵ knowing all activities,²⁰¹⁶
In their languages,²⁰¹⁷ sentient beings'
Coming and going and deliverance,²⁰¹⁸
Well-instructing, to you I prostrate.

When all the embodied see you,²⁰¹⁹
They worship a holy, great being,
Such that mere seeing produces
Faith,²⁰²⁰ to you I prostrate.

Receiving, abiding, and then departing,²⁰²¹
 Able to emanate and transform,²⁰²²
 Master of meditative absorption²⁰²³
 And pristine wisdom,²⁰²⁴ to you I prostrate.

Overcoming deceivers of sentient beings,
 Regarding refuge, skillful means, and purity,
 And the deliverance of the Great Vehicle,²⁰²⁵
 Conqueror of māras, to you I prostrate.

For²⁰²⁶ others, you are the teacher of pristine wisdom,
 Abandonment, deliverance, and hindrance.²⁰²⁷
 By others who are obsessed with extreme [ideas],
 Not to be subdued, to you I prostrate.

By your never forgetting the unprotected,²⁰²⁸
 Being forthcoming in speech among the retinue,
 And forsaking [forever] the two ever-present afflictions,²⁰²⁹
 Gathering retinue, to you I prostrate.

To you, who are omniscient,²⁰³⁰ in all [actions],
 Whether you are moving or standing still,
 You have no actions that are not omniscient,
 Possessor of genuine meaning, to you I prostrate.

In all your [numberless] actions for sentient beings,
 As you never miss the proper time.
 Your actions are always helpful to those [beings].
 I prostrate to you, the one who is never forgetful.²⁰³¹

Considering six times over²⁰³²
 All worlds, both day and night,
 Possessing the great compassion,²⁰³³
 I prostrate to you who mean benefit.

The one who²⁰³⁴ by²⁰³⁵ action and²⁰³⁶ realization,
 Pristine wisdom²⁰³⁷ and buddha activity,²⁰³⁸
 Is the guru of the Śrāvakas
 and the Pratyekabuddhas,²⁰³⁹ I prostrate to you.

The one who, by the three kāyas has attained
 All aspects²⁰⁴⁰ of the great enlightenment,
 And by doing so, for all sentient beings
 Cuts off all their doubts, to you I prostrate.

Never grasping,²⁰⁴¹ and [forever] faultless.²⁰⁴²
 Unsullied by anger²⁰⁴³ and not abiding in concepts²⁰⁴⁴
 Immovable,²⁰⁴⁵ and for all phenomena²⁰⁴⁶
 Without proliferation,²⁰⁴⁷ to you I prostrate.

In attaining the ultimate goal,²⁰⁴⁸
 Released from all the levels,
 The highest of sentient beings,

Freeing all sentient beings,
With countless, unmatched qualities,
In worlds and in the maṇḍalas²⁰⁴⁹
In appearance²⁰⁵⁰ of gods and humans
You do not see all its aspects.²⁰⁵¹

Paying homage to all the conquerors,²⁰⁵²
Worshipping with oceans of clouds of offerings,
May I make an effort at all times
At one-pointed practice according to their Word.²⁰⁵³

*That was the section on the fruition of separation from defilements and
creation of essential aspects by the path.*

Conclusion

1. Summary and [Final] Instruction

In sum, the ground, absolute dharmakāya is one with fruition as dharmadhātu. The completely pure accumulation of pristine wisdom with its retinue [of absolute qualities] vanquishes incidental defilements, as the wind scatters clouds in the sky. This was previously taught by the example of cleansing a wish-fulfilling jewel. Again, a sūtra cited in Asaṅga's commentary on the *Sublime Continuum* says:

Sāgaramati, for example, [let us say that] a priceless, precious vaidūrya jewel, very polished, pure, and immaculate, falls into mud, and stays there for a thousand years. After a thousand years, it is pulled out of that mud, cleansed, and wiped clean. When it has been well cleansed, purified, and wiped clean, it has not lost the nature of an immaculate, precious jewel.

Sāgaramati, similarly bodhisattvas fully know that the nature of the minds of beings is luminous **and all-pervading, like a wish-fulfilling jewel**. However, they also see that these individuals are afflicted by closely-associated, incidental afflictive emotions.

Then these bodhisattvas think, “These afflictive emotions do not abide within the luminous nature of sentient beings’ minds. These afflictive emotions are [merely] incidental **fabrications**. They are not real, but are produced as imagined conceptions, **and so they could be abandoned by antidotes**. Therefore, I can teach these beings the Dharma to pacify their afflictive emotions.”

Thus, a depressed attitude does not arise in them **because they [can] teach beings [how to] attain sugatagarbha through abandoning the afflictive emotions**. An aspiration arises in them to go before beings many times.

They also think, “In these afflictive emotions there no [real] power or strength, because the power or strength of these afflictive emotions is small. These afflictive emotions have no real way of abiding. These afflictive emotions are not real, but are mere imaginary imputations.

When beings analyze emotions as they truly are by proper mental investigation, they will no longer get angry, [and they will think,] “I should certainly engage in discriminating analysis, so that my **continuum of awareness** will not be connected with these emotions. If I am not connected with afflictive emotions, that is good; but if I am, it is not **good**.”

There, and so forth, this is extensively taught. You can best understand by the example of **uncompounded** space how, for this and the many other examples of the essence or garbha and its defilements, 1) Absolute ground and fruition are a single essence, the fundamental way things are within the truth of cessation. 2) What [actively] overcomes defilements is the [relative] pristine wisdom of the truth of the path. 3) Even when defilements are purified and transformed by that wisdom, the essence, dharmatā, is not changed.

The ground of the relative form kāyas, their first creator, and so forth, is the enriching family.²⁰⁵⁴ The [Great Vehicle] paths, beginning with arousing bodhicitta, the aspiration for enlightenment [involve] 1) the perfections, which are mostly²⁰⁵⁵ included within the accumulation of merit. 2) The developing stage with its accompanying [relative teachings and practices]. 3) Constructing and offering worship to representations of the three jewels, repairing damaged ones, and so forth, to increase the harvest of merit from the field of the victorious ones. 4) Trying to establish an immensity of aspirations, so that for those without a protector and those tormented by misfortune, in this and other lives, establishing happiness, benefit, and so forth, so increasing the **vast** harvest of virtue from the field of sentient beings.

These points are mostly included within the accumulation of merit of the paths of learning.

The fruition created by these has the abundant natures of the pristine wisdoms, buddha qualities, and buddha activity of the buddhas’ form kāyas that were previously taught here, and are also extensively taught elsewhere, in the profound sūtras and tantras.

Though the fruition appears like that, some say otherwise, maintaining “all that appears is nirmāṇakāya, all that is empty is dharmakāya, and all that is known is sambhogakāya,” and so forth. That should be known to be a deceptive alteration by many [spurious] tantras composed in Tibet.

Asaṅga’s *Bodhisattva Levels* teaches that, when all factors are divided between the ground or fruition, all phenomena of the paths of leaning – beginners’ arousal of bodhicitta, establishing the phenomena on the side of enlightenment, and so forth, – are included in the ground. “Ground” here means a [cause or] producer, like saying [that earth, water and sunshine are] the grounds of [growing] a turnip.

When these factors are divided into three categories of ground, path, and fruition, ground and path are divided from the fruition, as its causal factors. Therefore, dividing them into three categories or two have the same meaning. These two approaches are without contradiction.

Aspects that are included in the path of no more leaning, like the [relative] pristine wisdom of the form kāyas, are [included in] the truth of the path, but not included within one of [the three categories] ground, path, and fruition. In that case, “path” means the [four] paths of learning. Regarding what is taught, [in that three-fold division,] 1) things to be known include all of the ground, path, and fruition. 2) Things to be practiced, after knowing 1. are the correct paths included within the two accumulations of merit and pristine wisdom. 3) The fruition, things to be attained, is taught to be the objects of [absolute] refuge,²⁰⁵⁶ and immeasurably many actions of faith and devotion, like prostration, offerings, circumambulation.

Having understood those three, you should chiefly strive to gather the two accumulations.

(3). **Dedicating the Merit of Composing This**

This final definitive meaning of all the Conqueror’s profound and excellent teachings,
By the instructions of the Conqueror’s sons, the lords of the three families,²⁰⁵⁷
Clearly spoken, and realized by the kindness of my exalted gurus,
Is this Mountain Dharma, for practitioners of profound yoga, in mountain solitudes.

Because it includes all the rivers of the definitive meaning, it is also the Ocean of the Definitive Meaning
Of all the exalted, completely pure teachings of sūtras, tantras, and treatises,
As it teaches all of the ground, path, and fruition; and the view, meditation, and action
Of the extraordinary ultimate [definitive meaning], its name of “Ocean” has that sense.

Since its commentary ascertains the Conqueror’s profound intention, this is a commentary on the intention.
Since it comments to ascertain all vajra words, it unties the knots of the vajra words.
Since it clearly teaches profound dharmatā, it is a lamp that clearly reveals sugatagarbha.
Including all the depth of the sūtras, tantras, and oral instructions, it is also an ultimate wish-fulfilling jewel.

Emptiness that is and is not pervasive,
Emptiness that is and is not absolute,
Emptiness that is and is not suchness,
Emptiness that is and is not perfect prajñā,

Emptiness that is and is not mahāmudrā,
 Emptiness that is and is not Vajrasattva,
 Emptiness that is and is not dharmatā,
 And so forth here are well-discriminated.

Though, for those who think merely in terms of the speech of the
 elders of their own school,
 And for those who, because they are attached to what they heard
 first, are soon possessed by demons of slander,²⁰⁵⁸
 And for those devoid of the four reliances, who postulate whatever
 many people maintain as truth,
 Indeed, this is hard to reconcile; nevertheless, it accords with the
 intention of the Conqueror and his sons, and with reality.

May those who urged again and again, with good intentions that, I
 should write this,
 Harmonious friends, helpers who offered good resources, and so
 forth,
 So that all sentient beings might see and understanding the
 profound meaning
 Of the undefiled sūtras, tantras, and instructions, quickly attain it
 and so perform vast benefits for others.

On all occasions, the faith diligence, prajñā, and compassion that
 please the buddhas,
 Spiritual power,²⁰⁵⁹ honesty, shame,²⁰⁶⁰ decency, excellent
 livelihood, and generosity,
 Discipline, meditative absorption, and the four, six, eight, ten, and
 sixteen samayas;
 May they always abide in good actions and never fall away from
 that.

COLOPHON

Writing this work was urged by the speech of crown jewels of great and holy beings, like the great khenpo of the Jonangpa seat Sonam Drakpa; by masters and students alike; and also by translator-lamas proficient in Sanskrit, endowed with many good qualities of scriptural understanding and perceptual realization, like Lodrö Palwa; and moreover, by lama Chokle Namgyel, lama Loburwa Chökyi Gyaltzen, and others, many spiritual friends with qualities of learning, holiness, and goodness; and by true lords of yoga like Samting Cogbu, glorious Wangchuck Sherab, and so forth; as well as many excellent practitioners of the definitive meaning, and in particular, lama Yeshe Gyaltzen, who did respectful service with a hundred good offerings, creating great faith and devotion.

Therefore, this was composed by the vagabond possessing the four reliances, at the sacred site of Jonang in accord with the scripture, reasoning, and instructions of the profound, ultimate definitive meaning.

Since this teaching has a tight seal [of secrecy], it is inappropriate for you to teach this to anyone but the intelligent who remain unbiased and have experience of meditating within the definitive meaning, dharmatā; so please do that. To transgress that seal is to transgress samaya.

OM ĀḤ HŪṢ HOḤ HAM KṢAḤ

There is one kind favor that I ask of you.
This profound Dharma is inappropriate to teach
to those who are not suitable vessels of its teachings.
Such teaching is a condition of evil deeds and is forbidden.
It is also appropriate not to be stingy and teach it fully
to excellent students who are good vessels of it.

Through this excellent text that is clearly annotated,
Abandon view, meditation, and action that are inferior.
By this view, meditation, and action, vastly pure and true,
Attaining two-fold kāya, may you benefit other beings.

Again, I ask you that one thing!

MANGALAṢ BHAVAṆTU

NOTES

By Kunkhyen Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen and Rime Lodrö

- 1 DSG: OM prostrations and offerings to the gurus, buddhas, and bodhisattvas.
- 2 DSG: **I prostrate to** non-dual pristine wisdom, the **glory** of all beings; which is **vajra**, indestructible, and **sattva**; a single being, who embodies the three realms in one.
- 3 DSG: Of the relative.
- 4 DSG: Of the absolute.
- 5 DSG: Primordially and naturally.
- 6 Rimé Lodrö (RL): The two kinds of relative selfhood.
- 7 DSG: [**Beyond concepts of the extremes of existence and non-existence**,] in the center, or middle, of these; transcending the instantaneous [existence of relative phenomena, **abiding**] as the absolute space of [dharma]dhātu, [whose **eternal stability** is symbolized by an auspicious] swastika.
- 8 RL: The enlightened family of those who can and will attain buddhahood, as explained below.
- 9 RL: Symbolizing the all ground.
- 10 RL: Basic space, with the potential for manifesting all phenomena.
- 11 RL: The five afflictive emotions become aspects of the five pristine wisdoms, and so forth.
- 12 DSG: About that treasure.
- 13 DSG: The absolute.
- 14 DSG: *Yid*, conceptual mind, with its incidental defilements.
- 15 DSG: Of the absolute Dharma.
- 16 DSG: So that these beings can attain the absolute Dharma treasure, buddhas come to teach the Dharma.
- 17 RL: From the highest heavens to the lowest hells.
- 18 DSG: *khams*, meaning here *dbyings* or dharmadhātu.
- 19 RL: This story is told later.
- 20 RL: As the element of fish is water.
- 21 DSG: Five skandhas, eighteen sense constituents, the twelve sense sources, and the six sense powers with their objects.
- 22 DSG: [The meaning is that. in Indian cosmology,] the disk of [earth] abides [within] the disk of water; and the disk of [water] abides [within] the disk of wind. These are all causally related. [The disk of wind fully abides in] space, [which] is not causally related to the others.

- 23 RL: Because they are deluded, and they produce suffering.
- 24 RL: Basic goodness is as it should be.
- 25 RL: The absolute is not the relative cause of relative phenomena, as a seed is the cause of a sprout.
- 26 RL: *Gaṇḍavyūha*, *Akaṇiṣṭa*, the highest form realm where phenomena are interpenetrating and in which actual, as opposed to emanated, buddhas are said to abide.
- 27 DSG: They speak with many confused intentions, saying that sugatagarbha is the [relative] all ground consciousness, that it exists as incidental seeds of non-defilement, and so forth.
- 28 RL: Energies in the body.
- 29 RL: Or Nāropa.
- 30 RL: It cannot be established logically, like emptiness of self, the absolute of the second turning. It can only be established by realized experience of the absolute, as in the third turning.
- 31 RL: By which the doer is immediately born in hell without interval, without experiencing the bardo.
- 32 RL: Nature of phenomena.
- 33 RL: The gods' happiness lasts only until their accumulated good karma is exhausted.
- 34 RL: These three are regarded as synonyms here.
- 35 RL: Dualistic phenomena of the relative body and self-apprehension of absolute self.
- 36 RL: The absolute is the essence of all phenomena, even delusive afflictions of the saṃsāric relative. However, saying the afflictions in their present form are absolute aspects of the essence misses the whole point of purification.
- 37 RL: Body here includes the body's physical environment in the world. Buddhahood intrinsically other than our embodied existence could never be one's true self.
- 38 RL: The Buddha's abhidharma philosophy, explaining how relative phenomena appear, says that this mosaic of separate phenomena exists in our experience only for an instant. When tantra says that phenomena abide in experience as continuity, it opposes that view.
- 39 RL: The kāya of the essence.
- 40 RL: *Rnam par snang mdzad*, producer of light/ full manifestation of phenomena.
- 41 RL: *Rin chen 'byung gnas*, source of jewels / precious things.
- 42 RL: *'Od dpag med*, limitless light.
- 43 RL: *Don yod grub pa*, accomplisher of what is meaningful.
- 44 RL: *Mi bskyod pa*, immovable.
- 45 RL: *Sangs rgyas spyan ma*, Buddha Eye Lady.

- 46 RL: *Gos dkar ma*, White Robed Lady.
- 47 RL: *Sgrol ma*, Liberatress.
- 48 RL: *Sa'i snying po*, essence of earth.
- 49 RL: *Phyag na rdo rje*, Vajra Holder.
- 50 RL: *Nam mkha'i snying po*, essence of space.
- 51 RL: Avalokiteśvara, *'jig rten dbang phyug*, Lord of the World.
- 52 RL: The sense of touch.
- 53 RL: *Sgrib pa rnam par sel ba*, complete purifier of obscurations.
- 54 RL: *'Jam dpal*, gentle glory.
- 55 RL: *Gshin rje shed*, slayer of the Lord of Death.
- 56 DSG: Prajñā Terminator, Prajñāntaka, *shes rab mthar byed*.
- 57 DSG: Lotus Terminator, Padmāntaka, *padma mthar byed*.
- 58 RL: *Bdud rtsi 'khyil ba*, Amṛita Pooler.
- 59 RL: *Mi g.yo ba*, immovable.
- 60 RL: *Dbyug pa sngon po*, Blue Club.
- 61 RL: *Stobs po che*, Great Strength.
- 62 RL: *Gtsug tor*, Crown protuberance, uṣṇiṣa.
- 63 RL: *Gnod mdzes*, Doer of Harm.
- 64 RL: They and their energies are accessible there, like tuning in a TV station.
- 65 DSG: Referring to that luminous nature, [though the words are necessarily conceptual.]
- 66 DSG: Also.
- 67 RL: The seed syllable of mind, initiating buddha activity.
- 68 RL: The seed syllable of speech as mantra.
- 69 RL: The seed syllable of absolute body, as the essence.
- 70 RL: Because they have this absolute essence, and they are capable of manifesting absolute qualities.
- 71 RL: Which is an aspect of the absolute.
- 72 RL: Of the relative.
- 73 DSG: Without any phenomena that are other than suchness.
- 74 RL: The 'other,' three worlds, pure within the essence, as its aspects.
- 75 RL: As absolute teacher.
- 76 RL: As the Dharma of realization.
- 77 RL: Manifesting in the world

- 78 RL: The Dharma of realization.
- 79 RL: Of noble ones.
- 80 RL: The three kinds of liberation correspond to the three absolute kāyas.
- 81 RL: Of the deities and also a technical terms for aspects of interdependent arising, as described below.
- 82 DSG: Bhramā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva.
- 83 DSG: Of absolute body, speech, and mind.
- 84 DSG: Of the three vajras, body, speech, and mind.
- 85 RL: The ‘other’ three vehicles, or the essence of the three vehicles.
- 86 DSG: The three vajras, body, speech, and mind.
- 87 DSG: Corresponding to the three kāyas OR the beginning, middle, and end of the path.
- 88 DSG: Of body, speech, and mind.
- 89 RL: Actor, action, and object of action.
- 90 RL: OM ĀḤ HŪM.
- 91 RL: Lalanā, rasanā, and avadhūtī.
- 92 RL: Of enlightened body, speech, and mind.
- 93 RL: The logical two truths are the second turning are indivisible as self-emptiness. The experiential two truths of the third turning are exclusive as truth and delusion.
- 94 RL: The phenomena of realization.
- 95 RL: From dharmatā, each other, and one’s true self.
- 96 RL: Embodying of the experiential Dharma of realization.
- 97 RL: Causally or conceptually.
- 98 DSG: As the mere relative.
- 99 DSG: As victorious noble ones who are the Buddha’s children, [the bodhisattvas.]
- 100 DSG: Though previously unmanifest, it becomes manifest. [Also, it radiates blessings of self-awareness to all beings, realized or not.]
- 101 DSG: Of both buddhas and sentient beings.
- 102 RL: That enlightened family of beings who can and will manifest their true essence of enlightenment.
- 103 RL: Here, phenomena are regarded as the intrinsic communication of the essence.
- 104 DSG: When incidental defilements [in the minds of beings that constitute the relative world] have not been purified, [the absolute tathāgata] is not seen, but when they are purified, he is.
- 105 RL: One of nine examples of tathāgatagarbha, described below.

- 106 DSG: Of the absolute, [rather than the apparent fragmentation of relative phenomena.]
- 107 DSG: Of the five victorious ones, [Vairocana (etc.)], and the three vajras [of body speech, and mind].
- 108 DSG: And so forth, many different numbers.
- 109 DSG: Naturally existing.
- 110 RL: As in the Kālacakra. There the skandhas, wisdoms, and so forth, are also six.
- 111 RL: As in Anuttara or Mahāyoga.
- 112 RL: As in Kriyā Tantra.
- 113 DSG: [The ‘other’ skandhas and elements are] personified as the victorious lords of the five families and their five consorts.
- 114 DSG: The arising of these different assemblies of deities is without contradiction or incongruity, [as they explain and personify different ones of the limitless aspects of the essence.]
- 115 DSG: [Families of] many and few deities.
- 116 DSG: [The five poisons,] within suchness, [transformed into the five pristine wisdoms.]
- 117 DSG: Absolute tathāgatas.
- 118 DSG: As many as the sands of ten Ganges rivers.
- 119 DSG: Family of the single innate, changeless, completely established, innately blissful essence. Thus, all the many aspects of suchness are taught to have a single essence.
- 120 RL: Mantras with power arising from secret knowledge of pervasive, vajra mind.
- 121 RL: Explained later.
- 122 RL: The vowels and consonants are divisions of mantra, specific harmonic vibrations of sound that shape the world in unique ways and manifest as particular deities.
- 123 RL: Listed below.
- 124 RL: Described in the Kālacakra.
- 125 RL: Without a vowel being added.
- 126 RL: Each class has five members, for example, KA, KHA, GA GHA NGA.
- 127 RL: As described in detail, elsewhere in the text.
- 128 RL: Waking, dream, deep sleep, and the non-dual fourth, whose relative example is orgasm.
- 129 RL: Assigned to the now-matured sexual essences.
- 130 RL: The non-arbitrary, absolute continuity of reality.
- 131 DSG: Of absolute great bliss.

- 132 DSG: Of Vairocana.
- 133 DSG: Of Akṣobhya.
- 134 DSG: Of Amitābha.
- 135 DSG: Of Ratnasambhava.
- 136 DSG: To their relative manifestations.
- 137 RL: In the sense of an absolute nature that makes it possible for relative entities with their causes and effects to develop altogether, rather than a specific relative cause that produces a particular relative effect.
- 138 DSG: [The essence of skillful means] of the absolute ground of emptiness.
- 139 DSG: [Prajñā] of the absolute ground of emptiness,
- 140 RL: “Tantra” means “continuum” or “continuity,”
- 141 DSG: Objectless compassion is also called the “great compassion.” It possesses the innate joy of the nature.
- 142 RL: The first syllable of Hevajra. HE is an expletive that can be translated as “hail.”
- 143 DSG: Body is the bindu dot, [under the M,] the melted moon. Speech is the anusvāra, [normally two dots pronounced H, but here HA,] the sun and menstrual blood. Mind is the A, Rāhu. Their expression is joined as one.
- 144 DSG: The great bliss/compassion and the great form /emptiness are united as the highest nature that is the absolute way things are.
- 145 DSG: Of the absolute ground of emptiness.
- 146 RL: Of the relative expressions of the essence.
- 147 RL: The tantric commitment to see all phenomena as the absolute, enlightenment.
- 148 DSG: Of emptiness.
- 149 RL: Sūtras and tantras typically begin EVAM MAYĀ ŚRUTAM, “Thus have I heard.” EVAM represents absolute nonduality from the beginning. E and VAM, represent the relative dualities of mind and phenomena, prajñā and means, emptiness and compassion, and so forth.
- 150 DSG: Of the self-arising, five pristine wisdoms.
- 151 DSG: Of the six conquerors, or six sets of six [syllables generated from the] consonants, as above.
- 152 DSG: [Vajra, indestructible] absolute bliss.
- 153 DSG: The ordinary [relative three realms of sentient beings that are intrinsically other than oneself is united, without fault or contradiction, as the absolute, non-dual essence of the] three realms, the true self without other.
- 154 DSG: Inseparable from skillful means.
- 155 DSG: Referring to the kāya of the essence.
- 156 DSG: Realizing the absolute ground of emptiness.

- 157 DSG: A being of enlightenment, which is dharmakāya.
- 158 DSG: Of sambhogakāya.
- 159 DSG: Of nirmāṇakāya.
- 160 DSG: Of the absolute ground of emptiness.
- 161 DSG: Of the absolute ground of emptiness.
- 162 RL: Perfection of prajñā as emptiness.
- 163 RL: Empty phenomena as skillful means.
- 164 DSG: Of the absolute ground of emptiness. [*Ze 'bru*, anthers, is used as a term of endearment of a man for a woman. The reference is the eternal bliss of union of EVAM.]
- 165 DSG: [The unified duality] of the absolute ground of emptiness.
- 166 RL: *Sku*, also kāya.
- 167 DSG: Innate joy of the changeless nature.
- 168 DSG: Of the four kinds of fruition.
- 169 DSG: A fourth mark to the wishlessness, signlessness, and [self-]emptiness, [it characterizes the single, absolute ground of that emptiness.]
- 170 DSG: Of the relative.
- 171 DSG: Bliss abiding at the navel.
- 172 DSG: The absolute ground of emptiness.
- 173 DSG: Of the absolute ground of emptiness.
- 174 RL: *Mi bskyod pa*, meaning the motionless one.
- 175 RL: Meaning in Tibetan “the pervasive one.” Buddhist tantras often present Hindu deities in a Buddhist context.
- 176 DSG: Of that.
- 177 RL: Meaning “flame, flame.”
- 178 DSG: [Abiding in the wheel of dharma] of the heart.
- 179 RL: From the four joys.
- 180 RL: Elsewhere.
- 181 DSG: Of the ground of emptiness.
- 182 DSG: Of the absolute ground of emptiness, ĀḤ.
- 183 DSG: the ground of emptiness.
- 184 DSG: The true self [manifesting in] the fruition.
- 185 DSG: As other [than the relative] and inseparable [from the essence].
- 186 DSG: He is the ground of that exhaustion.
- 187 RL: As immaterial form without solidity.

- 188 DSG: [Sambhogakāya buddhas teach bodhisattvas the Dharma of realization,]
which is really the absolute ground of emptiness.
- 189 DSG: Abiding in the throat.
- 190 DSG: Bliss of the absolute ground of emptiness.
- 191 RL: The juice of the moon, which is said to have a rabbit's image, the white male
essence in yoga.
- 192 DSG: Of that absolute ground of emptiness.
- 193 DSG: [The one who makes phenomena] of the absolute ground of emptiness
[appear].
- 194 DSG: From the absolute ground of emptiness.
- 195 DSG: Reversed back into absolute bodhicitta, as supreme fruition.
- 196 DSG: Abiding in the throat.
- 197 DSG: The kāya of the essence, svābhavikakāya.
- 198 RL: The body of enjoyment, sambhogakāya.
- 199 RL: Nirmāṇakāya.
- 200 DSG: Of the absolute ground.
- 201 RL: Śiva.
- 202 DSG: [Four families corresponding to the four kinds of action] of the four kāyas.
- 203 DSG: Of the absolute ground of emptiness.
- 204 DSG: Which is not within the scope of logicians.
- 205 DSG: As the absolute ground of emptiness.
- 206 RL: In the absolute sense of being altogether. That is like saying that the
changeless sun could not emerge from dispersing clouds if it were not there to
start with.
- 207 RL: The natural enlightened family, as the ground.
- 208 DSG: From incidental defilements.
- 209 RL: The *Perfection of Prajñā Sūtra in One Hundred Thousand Stanzas*.
- 210 RL: The wisdom dākinīs are visualized as residing in a protective tent that is
illuminated from inside.
- 211 RL: That stabilizes experience in changelessness.
- 212 DSG: Of the changeless, absolute nature.
- 213 DSG: Always pervading the animate and inanimate.
- 214 RL: The dualistic subject and object of saṃsāra.
- 215 DSG: And ordinary beings, bodhisattvas, and buddhas.
- 216 DSG: Of [relative] things.

- 217 DSG: As subtle suchness without [causal] interaction.
- 218 DSG: The realm that is all of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.
- 219 DSG: Both physical space and the space that is the absolute.
- 220 DSG: As relative, compounded things have.
- 221 DSG: Of passion and so forth.
- 222 DSG: Of constant or intermittent defilements.
- 223 RL: Dhātu, khams, or dbyings.
- 224 RL: This sense of phenomena, *chos*, is synonymous with “relative phenomena.” In another sense, it is acceptable to speak of absolute phenomena. These are also called qualities of the absolute.
- 225 DSG: Of the three times.
- 226 DSG: Or difference. [The space aspect has no different qualities at all, while the luminosity aspect has no phenomena that depart from the single nature.]
- 227 RL: Bodhisattvas.
- 228 DSG: Only the ground is the nature of phenomena. It is without [relative] things identified as separate from or other than it.
- 229 DSG: Who directly perceives this inseparable awareness and space of [non-dual dharmadhātu].
- 230 DSG: Whether the capable are regarded as abiding as [relative] buddhas of the form kāyas in the world or as [absolute] ones in nirvāṇa.
- 231 DSG: Empty of faulty, [dualistic, relative] phenomena, the ground, sugatagarbha, [truly] exists, always and everywhere.
- 232 DSG: That title is bestowed because “tathāgata” means “going to suchness,” where “going” means “realizing.”
- 233 DSG: The great naturally existing treasure of countless absolute qualities of the holy treasury, sugatagarbha.
- 234 DSG: The perfection of prajñā, knowing the inseparable space of the dhātu and awareness.
- 235 DSG: And humans, and so forth.
- 236 DSG: *Ma pham*, meaning “unconquered,” an epithet of Maitreya.
- 237 RL: Dölpopa seems to be saying that there are two kinds of naming, 1. relative, depending on identifying mind and the mental, and 2, absolute, referring to aspects of sugatagarbha. Only those who directly experience sugatagarbha can use the second kind. They can put aside the dualism inherent in conventional language that presupposes objects like those of 1.
- 238 RL: The nature of gold is changeless, but gold can be made into many things, as needed. So, the absolute nature of sugatagarbha is changeless, but the relative kāyas and wisdoms can be made into whatever is needed by beings.
- 239 RL: Transmuted into wisdom, and ff.

- 240 DSG: Of the absolute ground of emptiness, and ff.
- 241 DSG: Of the Great Vehicle.
- 242 DSG: Of this tantra.
- 243 DSG: Also, suchness-vajra-being.
- 244 DSG: Pervading all phenomena, but causally interacting with none.
- 245 RL: The Tibetan for *ḍākinī*, *mkha' 'gro ma*, means “ladies that go in the sky.”
- 246 DSG: that is, pervading.
- 247 RL: Here, meaning consorts.
- 248 RL: Here the seal of the great mother.
- 249 RL: Their male consorts.
- 250 RL: With their male consorts.
- 251 DSG: The many tantras, mantras, mudrās, and deities all have the single taste or essence of dharmadhātu.
- 252 DSG: Absolute *ḍākinīs*, many *vidyā* and *prajñā* consorts of many kinds, pervading space.
- 253 DSG: In the expanse of the nature of phenomena.
- 254 DSG: Other than the external relative.
- 255 DSG: Possessors of all aspects of the essence.
- 256 DSG: And *ḍākinī* family.
- 257 DSG: Arise without contradiction from the all-good mind, Samantabhadra, that is other [than individual mental contents.]
- 258 RL: Binding in terms of the two truths. Also, within the relative, binding the nets of channels of the root and throat cakras, termed *mūla-bandha*, *rtsa ba sdom pa*, and *jalandhara-bandha*, *dra ba 'dzin pa sdom pa*, on the levels of body and speech respectively. The crown cakra is the locus of the universal interpenetration of all objects of mind is the *Akaniṣṭa* realm, called “the net of Indra.”
- 259 RL: *'Khor lo sdom pa*, the binder of the cakras.
- 260 DSG: In *Kālacakra*.
- 261 DSG: In tantras other than *Kālacakra*, *Lesser Cakrasaṃvara*, and so forth [there is no pristine wisdom family. It is included under the buddha family.]
- 262 RL: As in *Kriyā Tantra*.
- 263 DSG: Of the absolute ground of emptiness.
- 264 DSG: Of the absolute ground of emptiness.
- 265 DSG: In the absolute ground of emptiness.
- 266 DSG: The absolute gives refuge from all fears.
- 267 RL: The holder of vajra realization.

- 268 DSG: Of victorious ones.
- 269 DSG: Of Vajrasattva.
- 270 DSG: The skandhas of the absolute ground.
- 271 DSG: Ratnasambhava.
- 272 DSG: The sixth skandha of Kālacakra.
- 273 DSG: Accomplishment of the changeless nature, with the potential for giving rise to the play of all nondual manifestations of phenomena as its expressions.
- 274 DSG: Pristine wisdom of equality, or ‘other’ pride, that is other than, or superior to, selfish pride.
- 275 DSG: Pristine wisdom, absolute ‘other’ ‘anger that is other than ordinary anger and better.
- 276 DSG: The solid one of ‘other’ solidity. [The intrinsically blissful absolute non-dually manifests as white Buddhalocanā, and so forth.]
- 277 DSG: When cleansed [by wisdom wind], turning green.
- 278 DSG: From [the limited locations of] ordinary space.
- 279 RL: In iconography and visualization.
- 280 DSG: Symbolizing the aspectless body that is dharmakaya.
- 281 DSG: Since they are entirely conceptionless, [absolute manifestations of your true self].
- 282 RL: The five skandhas.
- 283 RL: The afflictions that are the five poisons.
- 284 RL: The colors of the deities of the five families.
- 285 RL: Like the bliss of a maiden on her wedding night, logical characterization is not the point.
- 286 DSG: These are colors of the [deities of the families of the] absolute ground of emptiness.
- 287 DSG: Sentient beings and the world.
- 288 DSG: E and VAM.
- 289 RL: The dualistic energies involved in sexual union are led from their usual karmic paths into the central channel, where they unite in freedom from dualistic attachment. This is clearly experienced at that time.
- 290 DSG: The unreal is associated with temporary, relative things that are ultimately non-existent. The real is the innate ground of their emptiness, permanent sugatagarbha.
- 291 RL: That is not distracted by saṃsāric preoccupations.
- 292 RL: To omniscience.
- 293 RL: Amṛita, the immortality drink of the gods, bestows bliss that intoxicates us beyond saṃsāra. The bliss of the gods is long, but temporary, Absolute bliss is

eternal.

294 RL: By consciousness.

295 RL: *De bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po'am thugs. De bzhin gshegs pa'i snying po* is tathāgatarbha, so this is equivalent to “the garbha or mind of the tathāgatas.”

296 DSG: *khams* or *dhātu*.

297 RL: A first order thousand-fold world realm consists of a thousand world realms. A second order thousand-fold world realm consists of a thousand first order world realms. A third order thousand-fold world realm consists of a thousand second order world realms, one billion in all.

298 RL: *Dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin*, Śuraṅgama-samadhi, after which the Śuraṅgama Sūtra is named.

299 RL: The Tibetan lunar month begins on the new moon day.

300 RL: In self-emptiness the first and second are the same. In emptiness of other, like a bottle being empty of water, they are different. In self-emptiness nothing remains, but in emptiness of other, the ground of emptiness of what is self-empty within it remains.

301 DSG: These sixty are the four ornaments of a bodhisattva, *byang chub sems dpa'i rgyan bzhi*, the eight appearances, *snang ba brgyad*, the sixteen aspects of compassion, *snying rje bcu drug*, and the thirty-two aspects of buddha activity, *phrin las su cu rtsa gnyis*.

302 DSG: As the absolute empty of other.

303 RL: A cause in the sense of the changeless essence that allows things to exist at all, or a cause that illuminates what is already there by removing defilements, dharmadhātu is not a changing, relative, interdependent cause.

304 DSG: When incidentally defiled.

305 DSG: Or attaining it.

306 DSG: Or attaining it. [Dharmadhātu has the] two purities [of (1). the changeless purity of the absolute nature and (2) purity from incidental relative defilements.]

307 RL: By churning.

308 DSG: And so, manifests.

309 RL: So, from practice on the path, there are increasing glimpses of the luminous essence.

310 DSG: In the appearance of pristine wisdom.

311 DSG: As the nature of the truth of cessation.

312 RL: Cat's eye works well here.

313 DSG: As defilements make it invisible.

314 DSG: And its primordial luminosity manifests.

315 RL: A demon that eats the moon, causing eclipses.

316 RL: The note says “made of threads of *treg*.” [The material sounds like asbestos,

which was known in Nāgārjuna's time].

- 317 DSG: By meditation on the path.
- 318 DSG: By meditation on emptiness.
- 319 RL: And can be accessed by a well.
- 320 DSG: Of the absolute dhātu, inseparable space and awareness.
- 321 RL: And can be accessed by meditation.
- 322 RL: Dölpopa argues elsewhere that when such authors say the absolute is self-empty, their presentation as a whole entails emptiness of other, and, in any case, that is the Buddha's intention.
- 323 RL: The point is not that the gurus have better verbal teachings, but that the student must follow a guru's practice instructions to attain personal experience.
- 324 DSG: The absolute.
- 325 DSG: So that, by this vajra yoga, this [nondual space] is seen.
- 326 RL: *Gzhan gyi dngos po[r]*. This is similar to saying "emptiness of dualistic phenomena."
- 327 RL: *Yang dag* [pure, true, real *mtha'*, limit in the sense of *mthar thug*, ultimate.
- 328 RL: *Kun rdzob 'di las [gzhan] gyi [dngos po] ngo bo don dam pa'[i stong pa nyid.]* [Dölpopa understands this to refer to emptiness of conceptualized relative things other than the nonconceptual absolute.]
- 329 RL: [With notes: the real thing,] in the sense of essence [that is other than this relative], in the sense of being external and supreme over that, [is suchness.] / That absolute truth [that arises as supreme is eternally existent. That is quite atypical for Candrakīrti, who usually holds it is wrong to say that anything truly exists.]
- 330 DSG: Of the middle turning.
- 331 DSG: Empty and non-existent.
- 332 DSG: Of all [relative] phenomena as self-empty.
- 333 DSG: The existence of dharmadhātu, the fundamental way things are, in which relative phenomena do not exist.
- 334 DSG: If that teaching is not heard, five faults will not be abandoned, but if it is heard they will be.
- 335 DSG: They will not realize things as they are.
- 336 DSG: Thinking that the absolute truth is that all phenomena are self-empty.
- 337 DSG: The existence of sugatagarbha, as the absolute empty of other.
- 338 DSG: Perception in the senses of the skandhas, constituents, and sense sources, [arising from karmic propensities of the two obscurations.]
- 339 DSG: The naturally existing essence, with its countless buddha qualities, is naturally, primordially pure; but some who have not heard this turn away from it.
- 340 DSG: Because their common essence is real, but the faults that hinder its

manifestation are unreal and temporary.

- 341 DSG: The existence of sugatagarbha being heard in this text and others of the
final turning.
- 342 DSG: For practicing and meditating on the path.
- 343 DSG: Who respects all beings his equals
- 344 DSG: That understands the faultiness of grasping conceptual self-emptiness as the
[experienced] absolute and abandons it.
- 345 RL: Knowing that the essence can be purified of faults.
- 346 DSG: That experientially realizes how the absolute empty of other is equally
present in both oneself and others, giving rise to kindness toward all beings.
- 347 RL: Eliminating the five faults above.
- 348 DSG: That does not despise others.
- 349 DSG: No faults of grasping self-emptiness as absolute, but virtues arising from
realizing the purifiable essence empty of other that is within all beings, [as above.]
- 350 DSG: Equal in having sugatagarbha, producing kindness.
- 351 RL: According to *Tshig mdzod chen mo*, Khentru Rinpoche, and Hopkins, p. 116n,
found in the Tengyur, these are 1. *Vajrapāṇi's Meaning Commentary on the
Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, 2. *Vajragarbha's Commentary on the Abridged Hevajra
Tantra*, and 3. *Kalkī Puṇḍarīka's Commentary on the Abridged Kālacakra,
Stainless Light*.
- 352 RL: When a petulant, sick child will not come to its mother for care, she entices it
by pretending to have sweets in her closed hand, saying, "Come here. I will give
you *laddu*." This story is used as an example of why the Buddha would give
provisional teachings.
- 353 DSG: These skandhas [taken to the] limit [constitute] the extreme of [fixating
phenomena as] real things, and they are also limitless by being beginningless in
previous time. On the path to enlightenment, by entering into realization of the
fundamental, [luminous] nature, these [fixated] skandhas are completely
abandoned.
- 354 DSG: And polishing to remove dirt [that conceals its true nature and color....]
- 355 DSG: As by cleansing and polishing away their defilements they, [gold and
bronze,] are seen; so to see the absolute, in [individual] sentient beings defiled
with the skandhas that keep the absolute from begin seen, [defiled perceptions of
individuals and skandhas must be cleansed.]
- 356 DSG: [Of conceptual projections,] so that their absolute ground can be seen as
pristine wisdom.
- 357 DSG: [True, nonconceptual,] absolute [peace, without the torment of afflictive
emotions that results from the illusory skandhas.]
- 358 RL: The mere I, without its baggage of dualistic fixations, is not refuted by
Madhyamaka.
- 359 RL: The absolute refuge of fruition, not the provisional, relative refuge objects of
the path.

- 360 RL: The mental and so forth refers to mind, the mental, and consciousness, as explained in Yogācāra abhidharma. The first moment of apprehending phenomena is undefiled by concepts. Then perception is conceptually identified as “this” external object perceived by one’s internal identifying mind, *sems*. Then, by comparison with images of remembered qualities in the mental sense, *yid*, concepts of qualities of the object are identified as its form and so forth. These give rise to positive, negative, and neutral feelings in the afflicted mental sense. Combined with conceptualized perception of other mental factors, these develop into full-blown afflictive emotions. From that, conditioned formations of possible karmic action develop. From that, develops the fully articulated samsāric world perceived by the eight kinds of conceptualized consciousness.
- 361 RL: The Buddha teaches all this, in sūtras like the *Laṅkāvatāra*.
- 362 RL: The sūtra system has ten bodhisattva levels. Tantric systems added others, up to twenty-one in some *ati* texts, to clarify the details of attaining enlightenment. Typically found are: 11. Universal Radiance, *kun tu 'od*, 12. Lotus of Non-Attachment, *ma chags padma can*, 13. Vajra Holder, *rdo rje 'dzin*. Usually the final level listed, the twelfth here, is ultimate, complete buddhahood.
- 363 RL: Analogous to tathāgatagarbha or sugatagarbha.
- 364 DSG: Or contaminated.
- 365 DSG: [*Rjo rje pad ma'i dbang*.] Here “vajra” refers to great bliss, [beyond bliss and sorrow,] and “lotus” to the great emptiness, [beyond emptiness and manifestation,] inseparable with that.
- 366 DSG: Although it grows in [and is nourished by] them.
- 367 DSG: Because they are really that true nature that is within them.
- 368 DSG: [It is dharmatā, which is] the ground of [non-conceptual,] absolute phenomena and the ground that is that is [empty of the of conceptualized phenomena of dharma and dharmatā.]
- 369 DSG: Abiding in them all.
- 370 DSG: [“I” here is the great, true self,] sugatagarbha, [denoted by the syllables] A and HAM, [together meaning “I” in Sanskrit.] The “great phenomenon” is the single absolute.
- 371 RL: The Buddha.
- 372 DSG: Self-awareness by the absolute of the absolute.
- 373 DSG: [Though a relative knowable must be either a thing or a non-thing,] neither is established [in the absolute.] Instead, there is a third alternative, non-dual things that appear within pristine wisdom, without the dichotomy or being or not being relative real things...
- 374 DSG: [Though free from the] dust, [or defilement,] of relative things, the space of absolute pristine wisdom does have excellent, absolute form.
- 375 RL: Similarly, vajra passion is a third alternative unifying relative passion and passionlessness.
- 376 DSG: The level of inner merging of relative dichotomies is also the level that merges *prajñā* and skillful means [as all accomplishing pristine wisdom.]

- 377 DSG: [As “What is” it makes the life of living beings possible altogether, but in particular] it is the immortal life of the true self that can never be cut off.
- 378 DSG: Sugatagarbha.
- 379 DSG: Of sugatagarbha.
- 380 DSG: Of the absolute.
- 381 DSG: As well as the pristine wisdom of...
- 382 DSG: AHAM.
- 383 DSG: *Bdag med ma*, [the nondual consort of selfless, relative phenomena.]
- 384 DSG: [Associated pairs such as] prajñā and means, emptiness and compassion, and great bliss and great emptiness are merged in the single essence, [as above.]
- 385 DSG: As explained above.
- 386 DSG: Like a reflection seen in mirror divination.
- 387 DSG: As above.
- 388 DSG: [The holy] syllables of the supreme, changeless absolute, sugatagarbha, [syllables of absolute mantra as explained later.]
- 389 DSG: That is supreme over, or other than, [their relative nature.]
- 390 DSG: [Self-empty, apparent] phenomena that are other than the essence.
- 391 DSG: This is not contradictory, because [sugatagarbha] transcends worldly examples.
- 392 RL: *Bdag*, also self.
- 393 RL: *Rgyud*, or tantras.
- 394 RL: The six vajra skandhas.
- 395 DSG: Or the meditation vajra.
- 396 RL: *Shed can*, virtually synonymous with sentient being, *sems can*.
- 397 RL: *Shed bdag*, literally owners of the power of mind.
- 398 RL: *Srin bu*, or worm.
- 399 RL: Explaining the tenets of Indian religious systems.
- 400 RL: Including not only literal mantras, but all kinds of interdependent, vibratory wave patterns and fields, like those of quantum physics. They never vanish, they only take new forms. As they are everywhere, like the silken banner above, saying they are inside or outside is nonsense.
- 401 RL: *Rdo rje rin po che*, can be diamond.
- 402 RL: The passages on belief in self occurs inexplicably in the middle of the passage on belief in selflessness in this citation. I would have expected that passage to be first, since the Buddha’s first teaching of selflessness was presented to correct that belief. I suspect that a passage presenting that teaching of selflessness may be missing, since the summary speaks of three successive views of a relative, conceptual self, conceptual selflessness, and realization of ultimate non-

conceptual self. That is the order of other, similar citations in this text. Maybe I missed something.

- 403 RL: This passage is actually after the next.
- 404 RL: Of the two kinds of relative selfhood, making those teachings provisional.
- 405 RL: For example, “There are no eggs in this basket,” negates eggs, but affirms the basket.
- 406 DSG: So that it is lifeless, without the great life.
- 407 RL: An alternative title of the *Vajra Garland Tantra*.
- 408 RL: Superior to relative selfhood. Lhag par is also the “remainder” in “what remains exists,”
- 409 RL: Of saṃsāra.
- 410 DSG: Lifeless, [with no awareness of reality at all.]
- 411 RL: When absolute emptiness that is naturally completely pure is purified of incidental defilements.
- 412 DSG: [The ultimate, non-empty] ground [of other things’ emptiness of the two kinds of relative self.]
- 413 RL: In realization.
- 414 RL: From obscuring incidental defilements.
- 415 DSG: When conceptual proliferations are pacified, the true self is attained.
- 416 DSG: “AHAM,” [= I in Sanskrit.]
- 417 DSG: Best of forms and letters. [A is the seed syllable of speech.]
- 418 DSG: ...And pervades the animate and inanimate.
- 419 DSG: ...And perfectly.
- 420 DSG: Pristine wisdom.
- 421 DSG: Of the relative.
- 422 DSG: Manifesting all aspects, abiding at all times, and the single essence that is the master or sovereign of all other things that arise.
- 423 DSG: The aspects of the naturally luminous essence are other than those of the relative world.
- 424 RL: Emanated.
- 425 DSG: and so forth, [all phenomena of the relative, as sugatagarbha.]
- 426 DSG: The essence exists within the bodies of all, but it does not arise from the body, [here including its worldly environment, by relative causation.]
- 427 RL: *Byad* is literally appearance, structure, beauty, symmetry. The eighty minor marks are *dpe*, exemplary, *byad* beauty.
- 428 DSG: The essence that is the absolute self of all is without the literal features of the minor marks, though [the meanings] they [symbolize are] complete in it.

- 429 DSG: [...The essence that is the absolute self is completely liberated from the relative dichotomy of things and non-things,] as an absolute third alternative that is neither.
- 430 DSG: ...Though in itself it is free from both, [and free from causing either, in terms of relative cause and effect.]
- 431 DSG: Naturally and primordially, [through realization that they never existed as anything other than that absolute essence.]
- 432 RL: As all these things are inexpressible, objects described in words with syllables and letters do not exist at all.
- 433 DSG: Absolutely.
- 434 RL: Mantric syllables are experienced by yogins as eternal configurations with absolute significance and power.
- 435 DSG: [A is usually the sun, so this means it unifies with HAM as]AHAM.
- 436 RL: Unifying with A as AHAM.
- 437 RL: As absolute emptiness, prajñāpāramitā, and so forth.
- 438 DSG: Absolute [life] other than and supreme over [relative life. Vowels are called "life-letters."]
- 439 DSG: [Mindfulness] that the actionless essence is other than and supreme over exertion. [Hopkins, p. 135n, notes that rtsol, here exertion, vīrya, can also translate āyāma, as in prāṇāyāma. It is said in hatha yoga that when dualistic wind-energies are stopped by stopping the winds, they are united in the central channel. Then there is realization of nondual pristine wisdom beyond conditioned winds, channels, and drops. That is the true self, ZHAM.]
- 440 RL: Teachings of AHAM are not hard to find, as they are found in all tantras. Realization of its meaning, the supreme self, is hard to find for consciousness.
- 441 DSG: AHAM.
- 442 DSG: That is other [than saṃsāra.] Variant, as the Sanskrit says: /AHAM is complete exhaustion and liberation/ From the bonds of saṃsāra. /
- 443 DSG: Is the highest thing, external [to relative things, but capable of manifesting all their aspects, and having them, in that sense.]
- 444 DSG: Variant: said to be beginningless spiritual energy, sattva [in Sāṃkhya doctrine.]
- 445 DSG: Variant: making everything collectively arise.
- 446 DSG: As non-conceptual pristine wisdom.
- 447 DSG: [Also meaning the Buddha,] since it is absolute nirmāṇakāya.
- 448 RL: OR confirmed as those of the Tathāgata.
- 449 DSG: In consciousness.
- 450 RL: Of the absolute.
- 451 DSG: Of [relative] things.

- 452 DSG: As a third alternative.
- 453 DSG: Of absolute phenomena.
- 454 DSG: That manifests as [all phenomena.]
- 455 DSG: From causes and conditions, being primordial.
- 456 DSG: [As dharmadhātu that is] supreme over, or other than, [the relative.]
- 457 DSG: Other than relative selfhood, and arising of all.
- 458 DSG: Absolute Hevajra, the absolute nature of phenomena.
- 459 DSG: Absolute Hevajra.
- 460 RL: Of phenomena in their mental continuums, including any phenomena of the two accumulations they may have.
- 461 DSG: The Buddha.
- 462 DSG: [Manifesting] the ultimate way things are.
- 463 DSG: Because saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are inseparable.
- 464 DSG: It is a third alternative devoid of this relative dichotomy, the great AHAM without example.
- 465 RL: Manifesting as the pristine wisdoms of nature and extent of phenomena.
- 466 RL: Relatively selfless absolute phenomena, nondual with the great self.
- 467 RL: AHAM has material manifestations.
- 468 DSG: [The same as the six kinds of beings, with gods and jealous gods combined into one kind.] Therefore, in the fundamental natural state the Buddha is not non-existent. These many quotations in accord with the excellent view are taught to avoid people falling into a nihilistic view.
- 469 DSG: The absolute vajra peak, AHAM, and ff.
- 470 DSG: Phenomena that are pure from the beginning [as absolute phenomena.]
- 471 DSG: By being other than or superior to the three realms.
- 472 DSG: [Of other] that is not empty [of itself].
- 473 DSG: [The] absolute [three realms'] nature that is the "other" cause, [beyond relative cause,] of the three realms and its beings = [sattvas].
- 474 DSG: Again and again.
- 475 DSG: That is primordially other than saṃsāra.
- 476 DSG: In the fundamental nature.
- 477 DSG: Saṃsāric phenomena.
- 478 DSG: [I am] the [eternally existing] ground that is empty of [these relative phenomena, saṃsāra.]
- 479 RL: Conceptualized as other than saṃsāra, and so forth.
- 480 DSG: Dharmatā, [beyond conceptual limitations.]

- 481 RL: I know nirvāṇa by truly knowing the experiences imperfectly denoted by the words.
- 482 DSG: As the absolute vajra peak, other and higher than [relative] production.
- 483 DSG: The absolute vajra peak.
- 484 DSG: By being other than and higher than [relative] mind.
- 485 RL: That is, uncaused and without location.
- 486 RL: Nature. Also reminiscent of the king of the gods, Indra.
- 487 DSG: And will.
- 488 RL: Maintained by Buddhists to be a worldly god who does not transcend consciousness.
- 489 DSG: As the vajra peak, AHAM.
- 490 DSG: I, AHAM, the absolute vajra peak, by nature equally pervading everything, am similar to space.
- 491 DSG: AHAM is said to be other than and supreme over what is on the earth and the space above it.
- 492 DSG: The ground of selflessness...
- 493 RL: Śiva.
- 494 DSG: [Made] other or higher than the lord [of this world, by the accumulation of absolute phenomena that are indestructible like vajra.]
- 495 RL: [Dbang phyug] is also the Hindu deity Īśvara, or Śiva, but the meaning, with the notes, is that a buddha is higher than at least ordinary notions of Īśvara the lord of this world.
- 496 RL: The Buddha, who is higher than Hindu deities like Īśvara and Maheśvara, claimed by Buddhists to be on the level of dualistic consciousness..
- 497 RL: *Tshangs pa* is usually Bhramā, but, even if it is so translated, it would have the sense of a higher Bhramā of the nature of phenomena.
- 498 DSG: Other and higher than.
- 499 RL: Respectively the ruling afflictions of the desire, form, and formless realms. ‘Other’ means the afflictions are absent. “Higher” means they are transmuted to pristine wisdom.
- 500 RL: *Gdong drug pa* usually refers to Kartika, the son of Mahādeva, or the river Ganges with its six major sources.
- 501 RL: Of Dharma.
- 502 DSG: Or jewel, whose lords are Vairocana, Akṣobhya, and Ratnasambhava respectively.
- 503 DSG: [“With] Vajra [dharma,” refers to the] padma or lotus family [of Amitābha. Its discriminating wisdom beyond ordinary passion is associated with vajra passion that appreciates blissfully all dharmas as they are. The karma] family is that of Amoghasiddhi and all-accomplishing [wisdom. or wisdom of persistent establishment. “Secret holder”] refers to the [pristine wisdom] family of

Vajrasattva, [described in the Kālacakra Tantra.]

- 504 DSG: [Nga variant *pa*. All these I's are still] AHAM, the vajra peak.
- 505 DSG: As AHAM, I desire what is other or higher than all sentient beings, [and compassionately desire that they too attain it.]
- 506 DSG: The [passionlessly discriminating, vajra] desire of the nature of phenomena, [spontaneously manifesting as compassionate buddha activity.]
- 507 RL: The two kind of relative selfhood.
- 508 DSG: Because I am other and higher than hell.
- 509 RL: The intrinsic joy of the eternal nature is higher than the ordinary, conditioned joy of the saṃsāric relative.
- 510 DSG: 'Other' and higher than...
- 511 RL: Analogous to how emptiness was previously explained.
- 512 RL: That is true for the absolute, but not for ordinary examples, like fruit that is pure of pesticides.
- 513 RL: The Uduṃvāra flower is said to bloom only every hundred years, or when a buddha or universal monarch is born.
- 514 RL: The first man according to Hinduism, like Adam in the Bible.
- 515 RL: The well-known list of three sweets includes honey, molasses, and sugar. I know of no list of four.
- 516 DSG: Other than ordinary space.
- 517 DSG: Dhātu that is the nature of phenomena.
- 518 DSG: Such as a vase or lamp.
- 519 DSG: It is said to be both the cause of purifying defilements and the resulting highest place or state of buddhahood. [That is like the eternal sun being the absolute cause of the possibility of clouds being blown away from the sun. It is not like wind being the relative cause of the clouds being blown away.]
- 520 DSG: As the seed of the absolute.
- 521 DSG: Dharmadhātu cannot be seen by conceptual consciousness. [It is seen only when the pristine wisdom of fruition is attained.]
- 522 RL: Śūraṅgama.
- 523 RL: Even though it is contrary to their doctrines.
- 524 RL: Jñānasattvas
- 525 RL: *Skyon*. Some of these are moral faults resulting in bad karma, some are simply the inadequacies of child-like beings.
- 526 DSG: Or dhatu.
- 527 DSG: It comes from the action of the naturally existing enlightened family [in all beings.]
- 528 DSG: Seeing the faults of saṃsāric suffering and the virtues of blissful nirvāṇa.

- 529 DSG: With no sense of the compassion of the Great Vehicle.
- 530 RL: The Mind-only school proclaims mind as the absolute. It does not accept the Madhyamaka position that the absolute is beyond conception, as Dölpopa and most of his critics do.
- 531 DSG: They say that sugatagarbha is merely provisional, and that it is not suitable to be [the absolute essence] empty of other, because it does not exist. They say that, because the absolute is empty of the absolute, and dharmakaya is empty of dharmakaya, the fundamental nature is cut off, so that even buddhahood does not exist.
- 532 RL: Kataka medicinal tree, clearing nut, *Strychnos pototorum*, whose seed rubbed inside a water jar precipitates any particles in the water. Apparently, since they think everything is empty of itself, they would like to clean all traces of “delusory” wisdom from their minds.
- 533 RL: By maintaining that there are no valid assertions.
- 534 RL: That is, intrinsically existing.
- 535 RL: *Khrag khrig*. There are different accounts of the exact number meant.
- 536 RL: Those with the nature of being afflicted because of having afflictive emotions, *nyon mongs shing rmongs pa'i bdag nyid mams*.
- 537 DSG: Views of what is erroneous as true, [and conceptualizing what is beyond concept.]
- 538 RL: So, those defiled by conceptual attachment cannot be transformed by realization of pristine wisdom.
- 539 RL: *Dgra bcom*, usually Lesser Vehicle arhats who have destroyed the enemy of afflictive emotions, but here buddhas who have destroyed all hindrances to enlightenment.
- 540 RL: Virtuous action and Dharma, since the enlightened family is dormant.
- 541 RL: Thinking one is already accomplished.
- 542 RL: Mostly in former lives.
- 543 RL: Especially of worldly pleasures.
- 544 RL: Bad conceptual views that obscure the nonconceptual way things are.
- 545 RL: By the influence of bad companions or wrong views, resulting in the next.
- 546 DSG: As we will by abandoning the Dharma. *Avīci* = Uninterrupted.
- 547 RL: Killing them is an evil deed of immediate retribution.
- 548 DSG: The Saṅgha.
- 549 DSG: Sugatagarbha, they...
- 550 DSG: The Dharma of the nature of phenomena, the existent absolute empty of other.
- 551 DSG: The definitive meaning of the Great Vehicle where the absolute is described as eternal, everlasting, ever-enduring, true, pure, existent, non-empty, and so forth. It is not their place because they fear it.

- 552 RL: In this world and by bad rebirth.
- 553 DSG: The next lines list four reasons for this.
- 554 DSG: Because the developing enlightened family is not awakened in them by former merit.
- 555 DSG: In the Great Vehicle teachings of the ultimate.
- 556 DSG: Of the absolute ground of emptiness...
- 557 RL: That it teaches.
- 558 RL: These verses are so condensed they are almost incomprehensible without commentary.
- 559 DSG: [1. The Buddha clearly teaches his true, profound intention. He also explains why he sometimes taught provisional] meanings [other than that and] different. [Some Great Vehicle scriptures] have meanings that are the same as [and not different from that true intention. if you study and practice, you can know which are which.]
- 560 DSG: *Kun la rjes song = kun la khyab pa*. [2. This unique intention is very deep or profound buddha nature going to or pervading all phenomena, both those that are an object of logic and those that are not. However, buddha nature is concerned with phenomena that are beyond logic, so realization is beyond the scope of logicians.]
- 561 RL: The profound, all-pervading single nature has many aspects and qualities, and these are variously taught, and always taught by many teachers, using many different terms. That makes the teachings available to a wide variety of hearers. However, the ultimate intention is beyond all those words. 3. That profound intention is liberation itself, That is why those who realize it are liberated.
- 562 DSG: [All the vehicles have negative teachings,] like selflessness [of the individual in the Lesser Vehicle and also selflessness or] emptiness [of all phenomena in the Greater Vehicle. These alone are incomplete. The ultimate intention includes positive teachings, and is not as these negative words alone explain.]
- 563 DSG: [The Buddha's profound intention] is the ground empty of a self of individuals and of phenomena, [sugatagarbha]
- 564 RL: 4. Those who seek liberation must have the wisdom to examine by reason how all empty, illusory things do not exist, and to examine by experience how the ground of that emptiness does exist. If they do, their doubts will be pacified, and they will not fear this Dharma.
- 565 DSG: Instead, they will appreciate this Dharma of the absolute ground of emptiness. That is how the commentary answers these four merely apparent objections.
- 566 DSG: [the meaning of words teaching self-emptiness is literally conceived, we become nihilists. However,] what is self-empty of descriptions is absolute dharmakaya that is not empty of itself. Since this is not contradictory, all that arises is dharmakaya. We need not leave the fruition for later, but can joyfully acknowledge it now.
- 567 RL: Nihilists think that there is nothing good to attain and nothing bad to avoid. If we think that, we get lazy about practice, and our understanding degenerates,

because we think there is nothing to understand. Once Thrangu Rinpoche, said, “I might go farther, but I am very lazy,” and thought it was quite funny, since snyoms in Tibetan means both “lazy” and “balanced in meditative equanimity” by realizing universal equality. Letting go into equanimity is a good kind of laziness.

- 568 DSG: Distinguishing the mere emptiness [of the illusory relative] and the ultimate ground of that emptiness that is [realized in fruition are very well taught in the third turning.]
- 569 RL: If we abandon these clear teachings of the Buddha’s intention, and we embrace literal teachings of nihilism, the Dharma will not work. All hopes of fruition are destroyed, and we are crushed. Then we have great anger at everyone and everything that quite obscures the holy Dharma and its benefits altogether.
- 570 DSG: [Thinking that as everything is empty, nothing truly exists,] so nothing needs to be done.
- 571 RL: There are twelve divisions of the Buddha’s teachings. Eleven omits the kind of sūtra that explains sugatagarbha
- 572 RL: When there are thunderstorms.
- 573 RL: Because the Buddha has passed into final nirvāṇa.
- 574 RL: Possibly the eight worldly concerns.
- 575 RL: So becoming Great Vehicle practitioners.
- 576 RL: Most commonly in small amounts added to amṛita pills.
- 577 RL: This is equivalent to the sixth perfection, the perfection of prajñā
- 578 RL: This does repeat.
- 579 DSG: As the fundamental nature.
- 580 DSG: The fundamental nature.
- 581 DSG: As the fundamental nature.
- 582 DSG: As the fundamental nature.
- 583 RL: Die and cease.
- 584 RL: Of realization.
- 585 DSG: [These four vajra topics explain how to attain the first three vajra topics, the three jewels, making] seven inconceivable vajra topics [of the *Sublime Continuum*].
- 586 RL: Even mostly purified bodhisattvas cannot apprehend them fully.
- 587 RL: Completely purified buddhas can apprehend them.
- 588 DSG: [One who hears just a few] words [teaching the topics] that teach sugatagarbha, the absolute ground of emptiness of other and feels devotion.
- 589 RL: By attain the perfection of discipline beyond actor, act, and action.
- 590 DSG: [Hearing is worldly conceptual] prajñā [that masters the logical absolute. Then] completely non-conceptual [perfection of] prajñā abandons the two obscurations [to realizing the absolute, 1. afflictive emotions and 2. dualistically

conceptualized knowables. By that pristine wisdom is revealed.]

- 591 DSG: About sugatagarbha [and the means of attaining it, presented under these four vajra topics.]
- 592 RL: They already had high realization, but vowed to remain in saṃsāra, manifesting as bodhisattvas to help sentient beings.
- 593 DSG: Sugatagarbha.
- 594 RL: Usually in the context of the profound nature and vast extent of phenomena.
- 595 RL: Hopkins says, p 182n, that this passage has been regarded as a prophesy of Nāgārjuna, and of Dōlpopa as well, since he has been regarded as an incarnation of Nāgārjuna.
- 596 RL: Kṣetrapāla. That is not your karma.
- 597 RL: As opposed to a buddha.
- 598 RL: Hopkins says that, in regard to Nāgārjuna, this is taken to mean he is of the Śākya clan, and in regard to Dōlpopa, that he is omniscient.
- 599 RL: 1. Giving material things. 2. Giving encouragement and praise. 3. Giving benefits. 4. Leading by example.
- 600 DSG: By nature.
- 601 DSG: By nature.
- 602 DSG: The absolute.
- 603 DSG: The absolute powers and so forth, transcending in number the grains of sand in the river Ganges.
- 604 DSG: [*Thub pa chen po*, meaning the] one who possesses, [*po*,] great ability [*thub chen*].
- 605 RL: Having a quality is *yod*. Manifesting it is *yin*. More commonly *yod* is used to say “such and such exists,” or “such and such has a certain quality.” *Yin* is used to say This is red, big, well-known, a mere abstraction, and so forth. However, Dōlpopa is making a valid distinction.
- 606 RL: From the four noble truths.
- 607 DSG: Primordial, natural....
- 608 RL: That does not abide in extremes.
- 609 RL: Cross-legged.
- 610 RL: Dōlpopa agrees that the skandhas and so forth are phenomena that are purified, *sbyangs pa'i chos*, but reserves the term “ground of purification,” *sbyangs pa'i gzhi*, for the absolute. He justifies this terminology by the scriptures of the final turning.
- 611 RL: Dharmatā of dharmas.
- 612 DSG: For [completely purifying the nature, all] purifying practices, [whatever they may be].
- 613 RL: Sometimes, as here, Dōlpopa states a conclusion in the form of an additional

verse.

- 614 DSG: Sugatagarbha, existing as defiled suchness.
- 615 DSG: As undefiled suchness.
- 616 DSG: The buddha qualities.
- 617 DSG: Of buddha activity to help others realize it.
- 618 DSG: Defiled suchness.
- 619 DSG: What [can be and] is to be purified. [The nature is an absolute cause of purification in the sense of a changeless nature to be revealed. It is the essence of relative phenomena involved in cause and effect relationships. It is not itself a relative cause of removing defilements.]
- 620 RL: Here “cause” does not refer to relative cause and effect, but is synonymous with the absolute “ground.” It is a cause in the senses that, without it, nothing would happen at all, and there would be no absolute fruition to be revealed.
- 621 RL: Or means.
- 622 DSG: Of absolute Hevajra.
- 623 DSG: There are the two purities, [1. primordial purity of the nature, and 2. purity from incidental defilements.]
- 624 DSG: The primordially pure luminosity of the absolute.
- 625 RL: Corresponding to the two truths.
- 626 RL: Perhaps Dölpopa was too optimistic about everyone understanding how his view incorporates the second turning, considering the strong negative reaction to this text of many second turning advocates.
- 627 RL: That is in accord with the teachings of emptiness of all phenomena of the second turning.
- 628 RL: Of conceptualized, relative characteristics.
- 629 RL: *Pha rol ‘gro*. Compare *pha rol tu phyin pa drug*, the six kinds of reaching the other shore, usually translated “perfections.”
- 630 RL: *Spyod*, using these terms, and then experiencing the phenomenal world as really corresponding to them.
- 631 RL: According to Buddhist doctrine, the first moment of sense perception is non-conceptual. Then there is a moment of identifying a sensory object as “this,” as opposed to a separate identifying mind, *sems*. In a succession of subsequent moments, mental factors, *sems [las] ‘byung [ba]*, identify characteristics of the sensory object by comparison with remembered images, then form emotional reactions to the object so identified.
- 632 RL: *Dben*, as in *dben gsum*, the three isolations from phenomena of body, speech and mind in Jonangpa practice. This is preliminary to yogic practice of the six unions.
- 633 RL: *Zag yod*, having emotional or conceptual contamination that makes us fall into *samsāra*.

- 634 RL: *Mountain Dharma* is more concerned with view than practice. However, realizing the view in experience requires performing the associated practices. In Dölpopa's Jonangpa school, these practices are included within the six unions practice of *Kālacakra*. They must be practiced under the guidance of an experienced teacher. They include unique approaches to śamatha and vipaśyanā that involve elements of yoga practice.
- 635 RL: *Ngo 'phrod*: also identify, receive transmission, realize.
- 636 RL: *Ngo 'phrod*, also identify, receive transmission, realize.
- 637 RL: These are divisions of the *Kālacakra*.
- 638 RL: "Sharp," *rnon po*, makes me wonder if *lan tshwa* and *zas kyi khu* just below might mean some kind of semi-solid polishing compound, containing dust of a compound as hard as or harder than the gem stone. Hopkins, p. 203, says soda, which would have some detergent properties, and herbal juice.
- 639 RL: Hair, or rough cloth woven from hair of a goat, yak, and so forth.
- 640 RL: Hopkins says quicksilver.
- 641 RL: This stone figures in an example from the *Sublime Continuum*, where the god Indra is reflected in it. I favor lapis lazuli, which can have fairly large, dark blue surfaces that are highly reflective. It is variously identified as sapphire, beryl, chrysoberyl, aquamarine, (etc.), and as cat's eye by Hopkins, fitting common modern usage. However, reflections cannot be seen in cat's eye.
- 642 RL: *'Khor gsum yongs su dag*, actor action, and object of action.
- 643 RL: Embodying the ultimate three jewels
- 644 RL: For example, between the emptiness of conceptual assertions, and the non-emptiness of the mere experiences that they are trying to refer to.
- 645 RL: Including mind.
- 646 RL: Since Mind-only maintains without qualification that the phenomenon mind is absolute.
- 647 RL: The objection claims that the third turning teaches, "Since the reasoning of the perfection of prajñā is provisional, the second turning that teaches the reasoning of the perfection of prajñā as definitive is, actually provisional." Dölpopa denies this.
- 648 RL: Three modes, *tshul gsum*: the three modes of a logical syllogism, for example, A vase is impermanent, because it is produced. 1. *phyogs chos*, presence of the reason in the subject, for example, A vase is produced. 2. *rjes khyab*. Forward pervasion, for example, What is produced is impermanent. 3. *ldog khyab*, Reverse pervasion, for example, What is permanent is not produced.
- 649 RL: Dharmadhātu is explicitly taught in all three, but not the tantric terms.
- 650 RL: Self-awareness is which the aspects of object and perceiver are non-dual. *Yul dang yul can gnyis med*, is experienced only in pristine wisdom, according to the third turning. Second turning advocates usually deny self-awareness, as a merely conceptual distinction. They speak of nonconceptual enlightened awareness that is *yul dang yul can gnyis med* in the sense of having concepts of neither object nor perceiver. Such awareness is not regarded as mind or any other describable entity at all.

- 651 RL: Of *Kālacakra*.
- 652 RL: Including “suchness.”
- 653 RL: Resolving obstructions that hinder realization.
- 654 RL: Literal rendering of *de bzhin gshegs pa*, usually Tathāgata
- 655 RL: The third turning agrees that all assertions about phenomena, are empty; but maintains that, while the experienced objects of assertions about relative phenomena are empty, those of absolute ones are not. This is reliance not on words, but on their meaning.
- 656 RL: The text says, “empty empty.” Such repetition means that an interval in a village without houses is commonly called empty, and the same would be true for other repeated words.
- 657 RL: Dölpopa accepts self-emptiness, with the qualification that it does not apply to the absolute.
- 658 RL: According to the reasoning of Nāgārjuna that establishes universal self-emptiness, all assertions that phenomena exist can be established as inconsistent. Therefore, their alleged, literal objects cannot exist, any more than the son of a barren woman or a round square.
- 659 RL: In the sense of the *Kālacakra*, other than the conceptualized duality of outer and inner and so forth.
- 660 RL: Rather than self-emptiness as complete nothingness.
- 661 RL: *Rnam bcu*. *Kālacakra*, with his ten-part mantra. One explanation is that the mantra has ten syllables OM HAM KṢAḤ MA LA VA RA YA (SVĀ HĀ). Perhaps, but, in that case, why not say *yig bcu*, ten-syllable? Hopkins has ten aspects, H M KṢA Ḥ M L V R Y A.
- 662 RL: Pleasing form, *gzugs bzang*, is typically used to describe the body of a god or buddha. The ultimate body of a buddha is sugatagarbha. The essence is formless in itself, and it has no relative form; but it is indivisibly associated with pleasing, absolute form, and so on.
- 663 RL: *Bde ba can*. In other contexts, the pure land of Amitābha, Sukhāvati.
- 664 RL: Either itself or something else.
- 665 RL: That is in terms of absolute truth. In relative truth, relative things can be empty of other relative things, as a basket is empty of eggs.
- 666 RL: No phenomenon that is an individual self is found within the skandhas.
- 667 RL: The imagined is the false relative, and the dependent the true relative.
- 668 RL: Like the horns of a rabbit.
- 669 RL: We also say they exist for practical purposes, or ‘close enough for government work, ‘like the things called real in the world, even though they are empty when analyzed for absolute truth.
- 670 DSG: Of the three natures, the imagined is forever non-existent even in the relative.
- 671 DSG: The dependent is not existent in the ultimate, absolute truth, but existent [in

the relative.]

- 672 DSG: The ultimate, perfectly established dharmatā, is existent absolutely, but not
in the relative; because, as it produces no relative effects, [it does not meet the
relative criteria of a real thing.]
- 673 DSG: The dependent.
- 674 DSG: The perfectly established, dharmatā.
- 675 DSG: These two, phenomena and dharmatā, are one in essence, as Dharmatā.
- 676 DSG: Since a relative phenomenon has faults of contradiction, it is one thing with
incompatible different qualities of being existent and non-existent.
- 677 DSG: Since existent dharmatā has no faults of contradiction, it does not have
incompatible, different qualities. [Dharmatā being what is existent] and [what is
other than what is existent being non-existent within it are] not [incompatible],
different qualities.
- 678 DSG: That is, since [absolute and relative] are contradictory, [the absolute] is
intrinsically existent, and what is different from that, [the relative,] has the
opposite quality of being non-existent.
- 679 DSG: Child-like ordinary beings are obstructed by dualistic consciousness from
seeing the ultimate phenomena of pure and true reality with pristine wisdom.
- 680 DSG: The pure and true ultimate, sugatagarbha itself is always appearing.
- 681 DSG: Absence of the pure and true reality of how things are, in relative
phenomena, and presence of that reality existing as the pure absolute....
- 682 DSG: Should be known, respectively, as not appearing to consciousness and as
appearing to pristine wisdom.
- 683 DSG: What is other than that absolute dharmatā.
- 684 DSG: [Beings' ... minds are ... obscured] so that they do not see that absolute
dharmatā.
- 685 DSG: [They] abandon the existence of the absolute nature, [thinking it is non-
existence,] and they are attached to the non-existence [of relative phenomena, as
existence.]
- 686 RL: "The absolute is both existent nor non-existent," inconsistently asserts both of
a pair of contradictory concepts. "The absolute is neither existent nor non-
existent" is similarly inadmissible in ordinary conventional discourse, but it may
be valid, as a way of saying that the absolute is beyond concepts.
- 687 RL: The *Perfection of Prajñā Sūtras*.
- 688 RL: *Chos kyi gnas nyid* in this context = *chos kyi gnas lugs*, the way phenomena
really are.
- 689 RL: *Gzhan dang bral*. The variant *gzhan dang gzhan*, free from other [and other],
would mean 'this and that other.'
- 690 RL: *Dgu*, literally nine, but often used to mean many. Hopkins p. 224, combines
1-9 with 10-18 to create a plausible single list of nine. However, aside from *dgu*,
there is no indication that this should be done.

- 691 DSG: Since the fundamental way things are is flawless.
- 692 DSG: [Since the essence is primordially complete,] there are no qualities that need to be added.
- 693 DSG: Look purely and truly, with pure pristine wisdom, at the pure and true ultimate.
- 694 DSG: From [dualistic conceptions of] consciousness [and the resulting afflictions].
- 695 RL: *Khams*, buddha nature, also meaning dharmadhātu.
- 696 RL: Of the relative.
- 697 DSG: [Of the absolute,] transcending in number the grains of sand in the river Ganges.
- 698 RL: Always means “eternally” for an absolute ground of emptiness, but for a relative one, it means that some relative ground of emptiness always exists.
- 699 RL: Used as dice or a medium of exchange.
- 700 RL: *Zho shas tsho can* also be paid soldiers.
- 701 RL: Because it is accessed through the yoga of the winds, channels and essences.
- 702 RL: The part that is regarded as imputed is the existence of real, material objects independent of mind that have real causal power. The part that is not imputed is patterns of mental phenomena that are imputed to be effects of the causal functioning of such objects.
- 703 RL: Nāgārjuna says that relative substances are defined by contradictory conceptual criteria like having a changeless, intrinsically existing nature, yet arising and changing by causes and conditions.
- 704 DSG: The imagined.
- 705 DSG: The [partially imputed] dependent.
- 706 DSG: This and that one of the three natures.
- 707 DSG: Though untrue in the absolute, imputed conceptions of the dependent exist as the true relative.
- 708 DSG: The two [relative] selfhoods of individuals and phenomena do not exist [in the absolute].
- 709 RL: The self-emptiness of the two kinds of selfhood of the relative is emptiness in that existing ground of their emptiness.
- 710 DSG: That absolute also exists as that essence of all phenomena [that is empty of the relative].
- 711 DSG: The absolute is not empty, and the relative is not non-empty.
- 712 DSG: [By the foregoing verses, all is explained] regarding the two truths, [absolute and relative, that include] all [things]
- 713 RL: The imagined false relative and the dependent true relative exist by existence as erroneous conception. By the true relative not existing, the absolute and the imagined have existence. therefore....

- 714 DSG: That [perfectly established dharmatā that] abandons the two conceptual extremes [of existence and non-existence], is the middle path of Madhyamaka.
- 715 RL: Because it is not empty of itself.
- 716 RL: The four purities.
- 717 DSG: Respectively. [The false relative is abandoned as the false relative, the dependent is well-known as the true relative, and the perfectly established is the true, pure absolute.]
- 718 DSG: Of grasper and grasped.
- 719 RL: Because true existence must be absolute, and anything changing is not absolute in nature.
- 720 DSG: Apprehension of sense perception as mere cognition.
- 721 DSG: Non-Apprehension of [merely imagined, dualistic] real objects [corresponding to apparent relative phenomena] arises. [We don't see rocks and trees as external any more.]
- 722 DSG: Non-Apprehension of these real objects.
- 723 DSG: Non-apprehension, even of mere cognition, arises. [With no external objects, talking about phenomena of internal mind makes no meaningful distinction among phenomena. Mere appearance is no longer seen as mind or even mind's mere cognition.]
- 724 RL: Therefore, this passage transcends Mind-only.
- 725 RL: Corresponding to the formless meditation on emptiness of the noble ones.
- 726 RL: Corresponding to the pristine wisdom of subsequent attainment
- 727 RL: *Brtag*, also examine. Since we do not conceive of sense perceptions as outer objects, eventually we stop seeing them even as mere appearance of something beyond themselves.
- 728 DSG: Of the relative, [with its dichotomy of grasper and grasped.]
- 729 DSG: Of the ultimate, [nondual way things are.]
- 730 RL: Non-appearance of all phenomena, even the absolute, too is transcended. Meditation that deliberately suppresses proliferations of luminous phenomena in nihilistic emptiness, mere non-appearance, is subsequently labeled as direct experience of the absolute.
- 731 RL: Yogins who dwell on nothingness do not see the positive absolute of the Great Vehicle.
- 732 DSG: Because it is unconditioned.
- 733 DSG: [This could also mean Bhramā, but in Buddhism he is not a fully enlightened being.]The body vajra, Vairocana, and the mirror-like wisdom.
- 734 DSG: Essence body, svābhavikakāya.
- 735 RL: The indestructible kāya of the essence.
- 736 RL: When mind-only is not capitalized, it refers to absolute mind beyond concept. When capitalized it refers to the well-known philosophical school that postulates

conceptually describable mind as absolute.

- 737 RL: *Brtag par bya dang rtog pa*. This refers to the mind, *sems*, of dualistically identifying conceptual examination, *vitarka*, with its bare dualistic object, identified only as “this,” before the qualities are filled in by subsequent analysis *vicara*, *dpvod pa*, by the mental sense, *manovijñāna*, *vid*.
- 738 RL: *Dmigs med*, objects without conceptual reference points created by the mental sense do not arise as dualistic, relative objects of consciousness, and they are “unborn” in that sense.
- 739 DSG: Luminous *dharmatā*.
- 740 DSG: Not consisting of relative real things [or non-things], but not without the real thing, the essence, that is the absolute.
- 741 DSG: [Freedom from conceptual mind provides] a third alternative.
- 742 DSG: Ultimate, pure and true ground of emptiness.
- 743 RL: Absolute mind’s, pristine wisdom’s nondual experience of absolute body, the *kāyas* of buddhahood, with experience of a variety of intrinsic buddha qualities
- 744 RL: A variety of phenomena that are aspects of the single, absolute essence.
- 745 RL: As this is explained in a commentary in Hopkins, p. 238n, through karmic propensities, mind appears as various bodies [senses], enjoyments [experienced sense objects,] and abodes of the physical world including sense organs, *deha-bhoga-pratiṣṭhānaṃ*. These, however, are regarded as mere appearances within mind of causal regularities due to karmic propensities, rather than as appearances of external objects other than mind and their real causal power. As mental objects, these phenomena are subject to mental causation in ways external objects are not.
- 746 RL: *Lus dang longs spyod gnas*. There is no *dang*, meaning “and,” between *longs spyod* and *gnas*, so Dölpopa may regard this as a list of two rather than three, as in the Sanskrit. In that case, the meaning would be “body and realms of enjoyment.”
- 747 RL: Conceptual mind.
- 748 DSG: Who cannot realize, and will not attain, world-transcending *dharmakāya*. [“Worldly nihilists” refers to the materialist *Cārvāka* school, originally called *Lokāyata* and *Bṛihaspatya*.]
- 749 DSG: Because mind-only is absolute mind.
- 750 DSG: Incidental relative mind does not appear to absolute pristine wisdom.
- 751 DSG: Relative mind.
- 752 DSG: By non-conceptual *prajñā*, there is attainment of non-appearance of incidental phenomena, like phenomena of external objects opposed to sense perception of them in an internal subject, and powers of higher perception and so forth are also attained.
- 753 DSG: Primordially, changelessly pure and blissful.
- 754 DSG: Luminous [nature].
- 755 DSG: Primordial [purity].

- 756 RL: Which Tibetans think of as interchangeable with the sky, hence the blue color of many tantric deities.
- 757 RL: In Tibetan *bde mchog 'khor lo sdom pa*, binder of the cakras of supreme bliss.
- 758 RL: In sūtra, bodhicitta, *byang chub sems*, is typically explained as “aspiration for enlightenment,” also called “relative bodhicitta.” In tantra it is typically explained as “enlightened mind,” also called “absolute bodhicitta.”
- 759 RL: Complete Union.
- 760 DSG: Or a dot with the nature of the absolute essence. [A dot does not have even the sensory qualities of an expanse of space. Trungpa Rinpoche XI compared entering it to parachuting in the dark.]
- 761 DSG: Absolute bodhicitta, enlightened mind.
- 762 DSG: Essence of the five pristine wisdoms.
- 763 DSG: Always.
- 764 DSG: Read *mtha' bral rnam as mtha' rnam dang bral*, [rather than the more obvious “those who are free from extremes.” “Mind” omitted at the beginning of the next line.]
- 765 DSG: No other object is absolute mind with these qualities.
- 766 RL: The author’s commentary, summarized by Hopkins, pp. 241-3, in notes and parenthetical additions, relates the verses to stages on the path.
- 767 RL: *Pha rol [tu phyin pa.]* Transcendent perfection. The two accumulations lead to attaining direct knowledge of emptiness with all its transcendent qualities, causing the relative virtues of the path to become the absolute perfections of the bodhisattva levels.
- 768 RL: On the path of accumulation. Here, worldly pristine wisdom is limited by mixture with concepts. The first five perfections become transcendent only when the sixth, prajñā, sees emptiness on the subsequent path of seeing.
- 769 RL: On the path of accumulation, by śamatha, tranquil resting meditation.
- 770 DSG: [The conceptualization involved in the verbal expression of language is the cause of projected dualistic perception of external objects. This passage describes] buddha children, [bodhisattvas,] on the level of devoted conduct. This level includes the first two of the five paths, those of accumulation and preparation.
- 771 RL: By vipaśyanā, clear seeing meditation, on the path of preparation.
- 772 DSG: As they are free from the two kinds of selfhood of grasper and grasped, [they go beyond conceptualization even of absolute mind, realizing it as empty.]
- 773 DSG: This is attaining the first bodhisattva level, [where emptiness is directly experienced on the path of seeing.]
- 774 DSG: On the previous level of devoted conduct.
- 775 DSG: [Realizing the emptiness of relative mind is mixed with residual concepts at the end of the path of preparation, then purely experiential on the path of seeing,] the first bodhisattva level.

- 776 RL: That corresponds to the mirror like pristine wisdom.
- 777 RL: The intelligent bodhisattvas manifest the pristine wisdom of equality in all phenomena of the path of meditation.
- 778 RL: Equality due to abandoning duality.
- 779 RL: That is like curing the poison of the afflictive emotions that result from dualistic perception with the great medicine of nonconceptual pristine wisdom.
- 780 DSG: [Selflessness of] all [phenomena belonging to] the three realms [of relative existence.]
- 781 DSG: [Intelligent] buddha children, [knowing that] all phenomena [equally] have the two selflessness, [by] ceaselessly [apprehending] cognition alone, [enter suchness,] *de kho na nyid*.
- 782 DSG: [As] mind rests as mere cognition of selflessness of all phenomena, even that mere cognition does not appear to have its own self-nature.
- 783 RL: *Dmigs pa 'dzin pa bral*: Phenomena are directly apprehended by pristine wisdom, free from being evaluated indirectly in terms of a conceptual frame of fixated reference maintained by consciousness. Phenomena are no longer focal objects identified as intrinsically separate individual things, with emotional reaction when their conceptual qualities are observed by mind, the mental, and consciousness.
- 784 DSG: When the basis exists through gathering the accumulation [of merit] through hearing and contemplating, and progress in meditation also exists.
- 785 RL: All phenomena are seen to be mere name-only, by realizing that they are empty of their own separate natures. That is equivalent to realizing them as cognition-only or Mind-only.
- 786 RL: As experience of mind-only develops over the first three levels of the path of preparation, due to increasing realization of selflessness of grasped objects, it becomes increasingly clear that the dualistic mind that grasps them is also empty of a separate nature of its own. On the final fourth level, it too is not seen. Then the bodhisattva is very close to the path of seeing.
- 787 RL: When Dölpopa says phenomena are not seen “even as mere appearance,” he means this kind of deluded appearance.
- 788 RL: Objects conceptualized and seen as separate from mind. Absolute objects that are non-dual with mind still appear in subsequent attainment.
- 789 RL: On the level of devoted conduct, [before emptiness is directly experienced.]
- 790 RL: Dualistically conceptualized perception, *'du shes*, that perceives phenomena in terms of conceptualized reference points of grasper and grasped.
- 791 DSG: [Objects conceptualized as external,] on the path of preparation, [as previously explained.]
- 792 DSG: With no conceptual reference point of grasper and grasped, dharmatā is encountered on the first bodhisattva level and above.
- 793 DSG: [To lead some] Śrāvakas of the uncertain family [of those who are potentially open to the Great Vehicle to enter the Great Vehicle.]

- 794 DSG: So that other buddha children of uncertain family, who might [otherwise] fall into the Lesser Vehicle, may grasp truly the tenets of the Great Vehicle [as superior.]
- 795 RL: Teaching to lead, *drang phyir*, is very different from provisional meaning, *drang don*.
- 796 DSG: The developing enlightened family [resulting from meritorious practice.]
- 797 RL: Since all beings have this capacity as their essence, there can be no permanently cut-off family.
- 798 RL: As a space where only conceptualized, dualistic phenomena can arise. The karmic seeds of perceiving these phenomena are stored in the conditioned all ground.
- 799 RL: For example, whether words are describing the absolute or the relative.
- 800 RL: Yogācāra, *rnal 'byor spyod pa*, means yogic practice. Yogācāra capitalized means the Yoga Practice school. "Yogic practice" does not occur in the title of Āryadeva's text. It is a subject discussed.
- 801 RL: This time the evidence is in the extended title, ... *thams cad rnam rig tsam du ston pa'i*, sarva-vijñāna-matra-deśaka... teaching everything as cognition/consciousness only.
- 802 RL: Transformed manner or perception of how things appear, which now corresponds to how things are.
- 803 RL: Because Mind-only says that relative selfhood of the individual, the grasper, is absolute.
- 804 RL: Here, atypically, Yogācāra is identified with Mind-only.
- 805 RL: A stock example of something that does not exist.
- 806 RL: One and equal because the single essence of reality is beyond conceptual opposites.
- 807 RL: Than absolute dharmadhātu.
- 808 RL: 1. Perception of other and 2. error.
- 809 RL: This is repeated.
- 810 RL: Here appearance = false appearance. There is another sense of mere appearance, in which appearance is necessarily truly perceived as it is. Appearance of things as they are is necessarily true appearance, hence experientially absolute.
- 811 RL: Precious baskets, *rin chen za ma tog*, is reminiscent of the *Precious Basket of Books Sutra*, where, in a story well-known by Tibetans, a miraculous basket filled with Dharma texts descends over the palace of the early king of Tibet *Lha Totori*.
- 812 DSG: The bhaga is precious because it is emptiness pervading space that possesses the essence of compassion. It is other than and superior to an ordinary basket.
- 813 DSG: Absolute qualities.
- 814 DSG: Primordially as 'other' desire.

- 815 DSG: The good fortune of possessing these six....
- 816 DSG: Primordially pure, [and personified as six sets of six *Kālacakra* deities, as presented below.]
- 817 DSG: The six primordially pure, absolute elements as Buddhacānā and so forth.
- 818 RL: Akṣobhya and so forth.
- 819 DSG: Afflictive emotions and karma, and likewise, the pervasive afflictive emotions that cause birth, those three, and the two obscurations of afflictive emotions and knowables, like those. “
- 820 RL: Bhagavān. See next note.
- 821 RL: In Tibetan *bcom ldan*, victorious or blessed.
- 822 RL: Absolute bodhicitta.
- 823 RL: Of Buddhahood.
- 824 RL: *Btsun mo*, or consort.
- 825 RL: Corresponding to the twelve divisions of scriptural Dharma, and the twelve true meanings described elsewhere in the text.
- 826 RL: Skull-cup filled with intoxicating liquor or blood.
- 827 DSG: Animate and inanimate alike.
- 828 RL: Drawing in a mass of particles to create an embryo-like mass, imbued with the pure divine selfhood of a baby buddha of the relative form kāyas.
- 829 RL: Serving as amniotic fluid.
- 830 RL: Because the absolute is otherless, the lotus invoked is not other than the bhaga thar invokes it.
- 831 DSG: Good fortune of the qualities ...
- 832 DSG: [With] the nature of [primordial] renunciation and realization.
- 833 DSG: Bhagavān.
- 834 RL: In very long clunky verses better read as prose, as the tantra itself admits.
- 835 RL: Also, short syllables and so on.
- 836 DSG: That pervades all [centerless] space. [Centering is fully merging with that, not moving to a central point on a spatial grid.]
- 837 RL: The self-existing absolute samayas of body, speech, and mind.
- 838 DSG: Absolute emptiness.
- 839 DSG: Absolutely [true].
- 840 DSG: Of the absolute.
- 841 RL: Enlightened mind.
- 842 DSG: Conquering both primordially and causally the afflictions of those who meditate on it.

- 843 DSG: The kind of emptiness synonymous with the absolute nature.
- 844 DSG: But mere emptiness of self is not called “vajra.”
- 845 DSG: Absolute.
- 846 DSG: That is the all-pervading fundamental way things are.
- 847 DSG: Primordially and naturally.
- 848 DSG: Pervading space.
- 849 DSG: The absolute....
- 850 RL: Though that is the primary meaning here of *bsam du med*, pristine wisdom is also called the wisdom of nonthought, because it transcends attachment to concepts.
- 851 RL: As the irresistible weapon of Indra, the king of the gods.
- 852 RL: Like a heruka.
- 853 RL: The nature personified primordially as a heruka deity who destroys illusory saṃsāra.
- 854 DSG: As regards manifestation, but in essence unborn. However, these two are without contradiction.
- 855 DSG: Pervading space.
- 856 DSG: [In being without qualities in itself,] and [in its totality] beyond example.
- 857 RL: Which pierces to the pith.
- 858 DSG: All of the three realms [of relative saṃsāric phenomena.]
- 859 DSG: Between saṃsāric existence and peace, [by destroying saṃsāric existence.]
- 860 RL: Paralyzing saṃsāra.
- 861 RL: Burning false phenomena away.
- 862 RL: Like a wisdom being descending in visualization practice.
- 863 RL: Seeing everything without obstruction.
- 864 RL: ‘*dzi na* [’*ldzig*. As Dölpopa explains these words below, “*dzi na* is a transcription of Jina, victor. *Dzig* or *sdig* can mean threatening. ‘*jig* means destroy.
- 865 RL: *Blo gros don bzhin rig*: understanding that is insight of reality as it is.
- 866 RL: Compare *rdo rje gdan bzhi’i rgyud*, *The Tantra of the Four Vajra Seats*, and the “vajra seat” at Bodhgaya where the Buddha attained enlightenment.
- 867 RL: Kāya, which may have the usual sense in English of dharmakāya and so forth.
- 868 DSG: Primordial first buddha, before all relative buddhas.
- 869 DSG: Naturally
- 870 DSG: Who is both [a vajra and a king holding a vajra.]
- 871 DSG: Holding a vajra, and holding vajra mantra, holding a vajra in both those ways.

- 872 DSG: Since all the limbs are vajra, ...
- 873 DSG: With the intrinsic light of the dharmatā. [The vajra nature also blazes with excruciating fire that burns away the sufferings of the relative into absolute bliss.]
- 874 DSG: Or strength of dharmatā.
- 875 DSG: Overcoming the side of what is incompatible with it, and since it can do that, [great.]
- 876 DSG: ...The three realms of saṃsāra.
- 877 DSG: ...That it can cut through anything [opposed to it].
- 878 DSG: ...Of [primordial] buddhahood.
- 879 DSG: ...Who is the absolute.
- 880 RL: The teachings are like an enticing fish hook baited with the desires of Māra, that reels us from the river of the afflictions into the space of the absolute.
- 881 DSG: ...Of the absolute.
- 882 RL: *Dbang byed*, an epithet of the desire god Kamadeva, who shoots arrows of desire like Cupid. It can also mean mastering when desire is mastered as ‘other.’
- 883 DSG: Great vajra of other desire that kills the desire of Māra.
- 884 RL: Bow that shoots the arrows of ‘other desire that kill ordinary desire.
- 885 DSG: Supreme binder, [like Cakrasaṃvara binding the cakras and channels in the configurations] of mahāmudrā.
- 886 RL: Such as the ‘other’ sense powers and their objects.
- 887 RL: *Sku gsung thugs* are honorific, so they are viewed from the viewpoint of enlightenment.
- 888 RL: Of all things in the essence.
- 889 RL: Beyond conceptual distinctions of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.
- 890 DSG: Self-arising, pervading space.
- 891 RL: Of the single essence.
- 892 RL: Of body, speech, mind, and pristine wisdom.
- 893 RL: *Spros bral*, non-complexity means “without the multiplicity of natures of conceptual dualism.” Translating “free from proliferation” here gives comfort to nihilism, though it could admittedly mean that relative phenomena do not proliferate, or that phenomena do not proliferate within the changeless essence itself. That translation is most appropriate in the context of the formless meditation of the noble ones. “Free from conceptual complexity” is most appropriate in the context of subsequent attainment.
- 894 RL: The first turning view that reality consists of independent point-instants.
- 895 RL: Images of empty form that are not fixated as solidity.
- 896 RL: *Snang bar byed*. Or illuminating darkness as the absolute three worlds
- 897 DSG: Mahāmudrā is absolute buddhahood, pervading everything, like space.

- 898 DSG: Primordially.
- 899 DSG: [Bolasaukhyam, Snellgrove, vol 1, p. 105. Cf. Hopkins p, 270.] The absolute bo la. [The symbolism is reminiscent of the Hindu Śivalingaṃ. It is also analogous to the symbolism of the bliss of the female organ, the bhaga.]
- 900 RL: Vajrāyatanam upāyikam, ibid. Singular: The Sanskrit seems to say: “The vajra faculty is skillful means.”
- 901 DSG: [Dölpopa seems to read the Tibetan the] absolute [vajra faculties plural are those of the totality of] male and female bodhisattvas [who perceive pristine wisdom]. This totality is [symbolized by] the union of the absolute bola, and bhaga.
- 902 DSG: Is taught in the definitive meaning to be the natural union of the absolute, and not of two persons, an external, relative male and female, joining the two sexual organs. [The original passage is about Heruka and Nairātmyā. Hopkins reviews the western scholars doubts about the symbolism. Be that as it may, for understanding Dölpopa, it is enough that the external symbolism of sexual union of the deities signifies the internal union of the absolute, not the reverse; and that experiencing this internal union does not require external, sexual union.]
- 903 RL: Dölpopa glosses *thig le*. Camphor can mean the male *thig le*, or sexual essence. However, it is usually the female essence that abides in the navel. In any case, the two male and female *thig les* are united by yoga, as the nondual absolute essence.
- 904 RL: *Dhi*. Which Hopkins translates as wisdom.
- 905 DSG: Her, meaning absolute emptiness.
- 906 RL: Ingesting whatever is encountered, like a pig, here the fecund vajra sow Vajravārāhī, as the essence that devours all relative phenomena.
- 907 DSG: The great emptiness and the great bliss.
- 908 DSG: That absolute, great emptiness.
- 909 DSG: Of the absolute, great emptiness.
- 910 DSG: Absolute bliss and emptiness.
- 911 DSG: The pure truth that is the ultimate way things are.
- 912 RL: That is forever accomplished.
- 913 DSG: It is both of [these two pristine wisdoms.]
- 914 DSG: The great bliss and emptiness are also AHAM.
- 915 DSG: The supreme siddhi, enlightenment, having the characteristics of the absolute is completely indestructible.
- 916 DSG: Mahāmudrā, the union of absolute great bliss and great emptiness.
- 917 DSG: The nature of all phenomena the absolute, great emptiness, which always abides as the great bliss.
- 918 DSG: Absolute, great emptiness.
- 919 RL: Or the *bho la*, for yoginīs similarly inclined to ultimate realization.
- 920 DSG: Absolute great bliss.

- 921 DSG: Absolute, great emptiness.
- 922 DSG: Of absolute, great bliss.
- 923 DSG: Absolute, great emptiness.
- 924 DSG: Absolute, great emptiness.
- 925 DSG: Absolute form equal with space.
- 926 DSG: Without suchness being nearer to anyone or farther from anyone.
- 927 DSG: Absolute, great emptiness.
- 928 DSG: It is their great life.
- 929 DSG: With the bliss of the absolute.
- 930 DSG: Primordially and naturally.
- 931 RL: Evil deeds.
- 932 DSG: The fundamental innate nature that makes no waves of [proliferating] conceptual thoughts.
- 933 DSG: Self-aware pristine wisdom.
- 934 DSG: Primordial purity.
- 935 DSG: With bliss, pervading space.
- 936 DSG: Compassion without reference point.
- 937 DSG: Of prajñā.
- 938 DSG: ...Of the relative three realms, absolute ...
- 939 DSG: Accommodating all the animate and inanimate.
- 940 DSG: Of all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.
- 941 DSG: The absolute all ground that is pristine wisdom.
- 942 RL: Of body, speech, and mind and so forth.
- 943 DSG: As the forms of a variety of goddesses.
- 944 DSG: By any cause and conditions.
- 945 DSG: These two are without contradiction. [The absolute cannot be taught in literal, relative language. If so, verbal teachings about it in the third turning do not meet the logical requirements for definitive teachings of the second turning. They are provisional by those criteria. Therefore, to maintain that the third turning is the definitive meaning is to maintain that the third turning's criteria for definitive meaning, the absolute, are not those of the second turning. Much bitter controversy over Dōlpopa's views comes from failure to recognize this difference.]
- 946 DSG: The absolute.
- 947 DSG: Naturally.
- 948 DSG: [What is] naturally [undefiled is] natural [luminosity]
- 949 DSG: [What is] natural [luminosity is] naturally [the nature of mind.]

- 950 RL: This repeats.
- 951 RL: On the other shore of the river of afflictive emotions.
- 952 RL: Variant: self-arising pristine wisdom.
- 953 RL: Jñānasattva.
- 954 RL: Variant *gsang sngags mchog*, supreme secret mantra.
- 955 RL: These examples are not from the tantra named *The Net of Miracle*, but, like the other lists in this part of the text, come from *Expressing the absolute Names of Mañjuśrī*.
- 956 RL: Absolute body of superior knowledge that is pristine wisdom.
- 957 RL: From the mantra of Mañjuśrī.
- 958 RL: Hopkins notes, p.280n, that the Sanskrit has akṣara, letter, rather than changeless.
- 959 RL: Which Hopkins notes might also refer to vowels.
- 960 RL: Which facilitate relative perception, the source of hope and fear.
- 961 RL: *Nges 'byung*, OR deliverance, occurrence of certainty and so forth.
- 962 RL: Rather than the torrents of afflictions.
- 963 RL: Variant *'jig rten mi rtog*, not conceptualizing the world.
- 964 RL: Wooden block beaten to call monks to assemble.
- 965 RL: Perhaps of saṃsāric body, speech, and mind.
- 966 RL: One to the seven royal treasures.
- 967 RL: *Lcang lo can* has a variety of meanings, having willows or braids, Aṭakāvatī, the pure land of Vajrapāṇi and/or Vajradhara.
- 968 RL: Ral ba, torn read ral pa, long (matted) hair, braids, curls.
- 969 RL: Significance unclear. Listed as a medicinal herb and the skirt of a celestial courtesan.
- 970 RL: *Brtul zhugs*, vanquishing ordinary habitual behavior, one may rest in yogic discipline or deliberately cultivate unconventional behavior."
- 971 RL: Hopkins p.290, says Bhraman.
- 972 RL: *Tshangs par*, Hopkins p.290, says as Bhramā. Literally "the pure one."
- 973 RL: Also Samantabhadra.
- 974 RL: *'byung po*, spirits, read *'byung ba* elements, arising.
- 975 RL: The male and female essences, thig le.
- 976 RL: A time of good clear weather in India.
- 977 RL: This is the most common meaning of btab in the relative. Other possible meanings include strike, expel, and transfigure. Hopkins, p.295, has "extractor." More than one meaning can apply, since the twelve links of interdependent origination that plant samsara in the first turning, expel it as self-empty in the

second and transfigure it as the ‘other’ twelve links of wisdom in the third.

- 978 RL: The transfigured twelve links.
- 979 RL: Probably the absolute and relative four pristine wisdoms other than the dharmadhātu pristine wisdom.
- 980 RL: *Bskal don gsum*. Doubt about objects that are hard to realize because of their 1. great extent in time, 2. great extent in space or their 3. subtlety of nature.
- 981 RL: Three Attributes or guṇas.
- 982 RL: Dhyāna.
- 983 RL: *Stobs ldan* can be an epithet of Viṣṇu.
- 984 RL: Or Indra.
- 985 RL: Supreme god in general or Śiva.
- 986 RL: *Gsum rig*: knowing the past, the future, and exhausting defilements.
- 987 RL: The three vehicles.
- 988 RL: Claiming that there is no existence other than relative existence.
- 989 RL: Or causes of separation.
- 990 RL: Though these words are not formatted as a text name, they are also the name of the *Kālacakra Tantra*.
- 991 RL: This verbal construct was moved from the end of the passage.
- 992 RL: The deities and environment or the perceiver and perceived.
- 993 RL: Who have not fully realized the emptiness of conceptualized duality.
- 994 RL: In the sense of revealing that they do not truly exist.
- 995 RL: ‘*Od snang ba* can also mean “the sun” or “sunshine.”
- 996 RL: Without the tormenting heat of desire.
- 997 RL: Food and drink of the gods that confers deathlessness.
- 998 DSG: Absolute perfection of prajñā.
- 999 DSG: Actually, since they are of the same nature.
- 1000 DSG: Because the absolute nature includes no relative natures.
- 1001 DSG: Of the two accumulations.
- 1002 RL: Probably meaning the fundamental nature that is the foundation.
- 1003 RL: Presented later.
- 1004 RL: *Rnam par mdzad* is similar to *rnam par snang mdzad*, Vairocana.
- 1005 RL: Variant *khye’u bzhi’i ting nge ’dzin gyi mdor*, the *Sūtra of the Meditative Absorption of the Four Youths*.
- 1006 DSG: [Needing to be] completely conquered as dharmatā....
- 1007 DSG: And supreme.

- 1008 DSG: Pervading space.
- 1009 DSG: By nature.
- 1010 DSG: Meaning of the....
- 1011 DSG: The center or middle without extremes.
- 1012 DSG: Prajñā.
- 1013 DSG: Prajñā and skillful means.
- 1014 RL: Or mudrā.
- 1015 DSG: Sealing with Dharma mudrā is also said to be and be observed as appearance of the great seal of the great king, mahāmudrā.
- 1016 DSG: Sitting on.
- 1017 DSG: And various other names.
- 1018 DSG: Also called Cakrasaṃvara.
- 1019 DSG: E VAṂ A HA HA KṢA, and so forth.
- 1020 DSG: Or teachings, or failures to teach EVAM as different explanations of suchness, and so forth.
- 1021 DSG: Pervading space.
- 1022 DSG: Pure and true tantras that express suchness by EVAM, at the beginning.
- 1023 DSG: That is the arising of the appearances of pristine wisdom.
- 1024 DSG: For the absolute object of this meditation.
- 1025 DSG: That is naturally complete.
- 1026 DSG: By nature.
- 1027 DSG: Pervading space.
- 1028 DSG: Qualities of the absolute.
- 1029 DSG: It should be realized that these many names all have the same meaning.
- 1030 DSG: Of dharmatā.
- 1031 DSG: The completion stage that is 'other' or supreme.
- 1032 DSG: That are 'other' or supreme.
- 1033 DSG: Both pervading space.
- 1034 RL: Of saṃsāric mind.
- 1035 DSG: Naturally.
- 1036 DSG: Absolute essence and relative phenomena.
- 1037 DSG: Naturally.
- 1038 DSG: The deities, mantras, maṇḍalas, mudras, siddhis, jewels of refuge, and so forth of the naturally pure nature.

- 1039 DSG: Absolute body speech and mind.
- 1040 DSG: By filling them [with their essence.]
- 1041 DSG: Names whose profound meaning is dharmatā.
- 1042 DSG: These symbolic names teach self-arising, non-dual pristine wisdom.
- 1043 DSG: And the especially exalted treatises that teach them.
- 1044 DSG: As teaching the single meaning of dharmatā by many names.
- 1045 DSG: Ground of emptiness, tathāgatagarbha.
- 1046 DSG: It is also called by those names.
- 1047 DSG: The ground of emptiness, tathāgatagarbha.
- 1048 DSG: Absolute and pervading space.
- 1049 DSG: That is naturally existing.
- 1050 DSG: Timelessness pervading space.
- 1051 DSG: ‘Other’ existence without birth and destruction.
- 1052 DSG: Purity and truth.
- 1053 DSG: Absolute natural purity.
- 1054 DSG: Absolute and all-pervading space.
- 1055 DSG: Like insubstantial images in mirror divination.
- 1056 DSG: Non-dual pristine wisdom, the unbiased first buddha, and motionless bliss.
- 1057 DSG: The desirable ultimate and supreme changeless bliss and the great offering of the great passion.
- 1058 DSG: A third alternative, in which the three realms are one as self-arising...
- 1059 RL: Bodhisattva.
- 1060 DSG: The absolute ground without afflictions of the relative, but with absolute great afflictions that [have are aspects of pristine wisdom.]
- 1061 DSG: Innate pristine wisdom and glorious, ŚRĪ, and absolute bodhicitta or enlightened mind and vowels, āli, holding bindu.
- 1062 DSG: That are inseparable.
- 1063 RL: Literal translations of common Tibetan words for woman, *bud med*, *mi mo*, and *chung ma*. *Bud med* is the most common.
- 1064 RL: Guhyasamāja. The following are also names of tantras.
- 1065 RL: Cakrasaṃvara.
- 1066 RL: They have their own version of 1. birth, 2. enduring and 3. death, that is not quite the same as that of humans. Humans also have sickness.
- 1067 RL: From different languages, dialects, or vernacular styles.
- 1068 RL: *Sgrub*. Variant *sgrib*, “since, in other cases, the meaning may be obscured.” In

either case, the proper meaning is determined by understanding that all the different names have the same ultimate meaning. This text has a *phyir*, “because” here; but, unlike other editions, there is no *dang* / indicating the end of the list entry. In any case, the next entry must begin here, or the list will not have the required eight members.

- 1069 DSG: That is generally taught about primordial, natural purity.
- 1070 DSG: For example, the suchness of form is said to be the buddha Vairocana, and so forth.
- 1071 DSG: Primordially and naturally.
- 1072 RL: The three poisons.
- 1073 RL: From the twelve links of interdependent origination.
- 1074 RL: According to abhidharma, form, as a momentary entity limited in space and time, cannot exist or have effects outside those limits. *Nying mtshams sbyor ba*, here “joining of gaps,” can also mean rebirth.
- 1075 RL: There is mere appearance, but none corresponding to these incoherent descriptions.
- 1076 DSG: Primordially pure, and ff
- 1077 DSG: Pervading space.
- 1078 RL: Nairātmyā.
- 1079 RL: *Chos kyi khams*. The phenomena or dharma constituent, the objects of the mental sense.
- 1080 RL: This name being listed, rather than Phenomena Vajrī, suggests that it would make sense to add “constituent” to the other names.
- 1081 RL: *Rkun ma*: Thief or stealthy lady.
- 1082 RL: *Ro langs ma*. Walking Corpse Lady, an undead spirit, something like a vampire.
- 1083 RL: Meaning “voracious,” Most commonly found as one of the Gaurīs in the retinue of Hevajra.
- 1084 RL: *Sa spyod ma*: Queen or Terrestrial Realm Lady.
- 1085 DSG: Often translated *chos kyi dbyings* = dharmadhātu, but *chos kyi khams*, constituent of mental phenomena is better.
- 1086 RL: *Mkha’ spyod ma*: Sky Realm/ Enjoyer Lady.
- 1087 RL: Of the eye sense power, object, and consciousness, the conditions of visual perception.
- 1088 RL: The contacts of the pure ear, nose tongue, body, and mental sense, making six ‘other’ contacts.
- 1089 RL: Moved up from below.
- 1090 RL: Meaning indigo.
- 1091 RL: *Rngon pa mo*, huntress.

- 1092 RL: A fierce woman, a woman of the Caṇḍalī tribe. Also the Sanskrit name of inner heat yoga, *gtum mo*.
- 1093 RL: A low caste minstrel or a kind of drum played by one.
- 1094 RL: And ff.
- 1095 RL: Born from others of the four kinds of birth.
- 1096 RL: As extensively explained in the *Inner Kālacakra*.
- 1097 DSG: Primordially.
- 1098 RL: And ff.
- 1099 RL: Of the twelve links of interdependent origination, also called “faces.”
- 1100 RL: The vital essence, from the trio of nādi, prāṇa, and bindu, *rtsa*, *rlung*, and *thig le*, the winds, channels and vital essences.
- 1101 DSG: By the primordial cessation of the saṃsāric twelve links [of interdependent origination within eternal pristine wisdom.]
- 1102 DSG: Of the [inner life-]wind [in the corresponding cakras. These correspond to external astrological conjunctions.]
- 1103 DSG: [These relative manifestations are] primordially [absent].
- 1104 RL: By pristine wisdom.
- 1105 DSG: Of absolute [attainment, the twelve true meanings.]
- 1106 DSG: [The external meeting places of the yogins and dākinīs, that symbolize the] twelve [aspects] of the truth of cessation, [as explained just below.]
- 1107 RL: Pīṭha and upapīṭha.
- 1108 RL: Kṣetra and upakṣetra
- 1109 RL: Candoha and upacandoha
- 1110 RL: Melāpaka and upamelāpaka.
- 1111 DSG: [‘*Thung gcod*, literally drink cutter.] Usually the eleventh and twelfth gathering places.
- 1112 DSG: [Smaśāna and upasmaśāna.] Usually the ninth and tenth gathering places.
- 1113 RL: Primordially.
- 1114 DSG: [As a whole,] symbolizing dharmadhātu.
- 1115 DSG: Of that dharmadhātu maṇḍala palace. [The gates and tops are like the pillars and tops of Stonehenge, except that the top stones have twelve elaborately decorated levels, corresponding to the twelve true meanings.]
- 1116 RL: Powerful goddesses.
- 1117 RL: Transcendent knowledge goddesses.
- 1118 RL: Of the first six perceptions, the higher ones of pure perception, and the perfection of wisdom.
- 1119 RL: Literally “eaten and eater,” but the reference is all enjoyment of sense objects,

not just of those that can be literally consumed.

1120 RL: Compounded and uncompounded, of the relative and absolute respectively.

1121 RL: Conceptualized as intrinsic characteristics of an independent real thing.

1122 RL: They too are empty, but that is emptiness of the compounded, not this kind of emptiness.

1123 RL: That constitute a relative body and its environment.

1124 RL: Since Mind-only, unlike Madhyamaka, maintains that mind is absolute, that system cannot transcend dualistic concepts.

1125 DSG: 1. The unreality of the two kinds of selfhood and, 2. of that unreality, / The real ground or essence, are the defining characteristics of emptiness.

1126 RL: Sgro 'dogs. The literal meaning is attaching feathers to something.

1127 RL: Without the addition it says, "Dualistic realities are non-existent." Such realities would have one or both of the two selfhoods of phenomena and individuals.

1128 RL: How can the absolute be both beyond concept and describable by concepts? This is a key question for understanding and evaluating Dölpopa's view. It seems to mean that, when the experiential absolute is evaluated from the viewpoint of the logical absolute, 1. Conceptual descriptions do not bear analysis for absolute truth, however, 2. they are valid within conventional discourse that describes what is experienced in the relative. If so, the third turning experienced absolute is a division within logical relative truth, distinguishing the perfectly established absolute nature from the other two of the three natures, which are relative. It is not established within logical absolute truth. The experientially definitive is logically provisional, and vice versa. The potential for confusion is obvious.

1129 RL: All assertions establishing the characteristics of the experienced absolute of the Dharma of realization in the third turning, and those that refute them in the second for that matter, must be made within some context of relative truth and justified by conventional criteria. Trungpa Rinpoche XI used to say that ultimately, for knowing how things are, the relative is more important than the absolute.

1130 RL: As the essence.

1131 DSG: As interdependent arising, which Nāgārjuna also equates with self-emptiness.

1132 RL: As nothingness.

1133 DSG: Or 'other' and beyond [the relative.]

1134 DSG: Therefore, that kind of self-emptiness is not supreme.

1135 RL: Because the absolute of other emptiness, like the absolute of self-emptiness, is beyond concepts. Paradoxically, that is a non-contradictory statement about the meaning of the concepts "absolute" and "not absolute" within conventional discourse.

1136 RL: Because "true" and "absolute" are synonymous within conventional discourse.

1137 RL: By their self-emptiness.

1138 DSG: As the essence of pristine wisdom with no other essence.

- 1139 DSG: Pervading space.
- 1140 DSG: Pervading space.
- 1141 RL: Like being just a little bit pregnant.
- 1142 RL: It is not eliminated by analysis for absolute truth by criteria of truth in the conventional.
- 1143 RL: As emptiness and non-existence would make no distinction among phenomena, they would be meaningless conventionally. They can be meaningful conventionally only if something is non-empty and truly existent. No assertions of existence are meaningful absolutely.
- 1144 RL: People who know only the meaning of words think they know and see more than they do. They take the logic of self-emptiness for a description of experience, and they do not see the absurdity of doing so.
- 1145 RL: Conceptual views that cannot apprehend the non-conceptual way things are.
- 1146 RL: Because the patient did not use it properly.
- 1147 DSG: Where everything is empty of its own essence.
- 1148 DSG: If the *kāya* of the essence, *dharmatā*, is empty of itself, there is no natural state. Buddhahood is an empty name. The fruition is annihilated. The path is fundamentally invalid. [With nowhere to go,] it cannot be practiced. Many bad views spread, like the belief that there is neither good nor evil.
- 1149 RL: Whose fruitless union with the ultimate unifies nothing with nothing at all.
- 1150 RL: The conventional logic of these terms allows such a resolution, by distinguishing criteria of the relative and the absolute.
- 1151 RL: So that is cannot be a relative real thing.
- 1152 RL: In relative terms.
- 1153 RL: But apprehended by self-aware pristine wisdom.
- 1154 RL: Though whether all non-Buddhist Indian views are like that is dubious.
- 1155 RL: In relative terms, but analyzable, demonstrable, a support, apparent, knowable, and abiding in its own place in absolute terms.
- 1156 RL: *Gnas med*, which also occurs just below, read *rten med*.
- 1157 DSG: The Jewel Heap Sūtra, [as quoted above.]
- 1158 RL: *Blo*, samsāric mind or intellect.
- 1159 DSG: Through the pristine wisdom of the path.
- 1160 RL: Of the path.
- 1161 RL: In the formless meditation of the noble ones that directly apprehends emptiness.
- 1162 RL: Which may be present at one time and not at another, so that it is incorrect to say without qualification that they exist or do not exist there.
- 1163 RL: The ultimate.

- 1164 DSG: Do not say Buddhahood exists inseparably within conceptual mind and that it does not exist inseparably within pristine wisdom. [However, for mind in general, neither is correct.]
- 1165 DSG: Even though he exists.
- 1166 DSG: Even though it exists.
- 1167 DSG: Even though they do.
- 1168 DSG: Also unfortunate with little understanding.
- 1169 RL: Or essence, because a banana tree's stem is an onion-like series of leaves that is hollow in the middle.
- 1170 RL: *Chu shing* is often translated plantain, but a plantain fruit is starchy, not sweet.
- 1171 RL: Or essence, because it is just a continuum of illusory phenomena.
- 1172 RL: Editors have sometimes twisted my arm to translate *bdud rtsi* as "nectar" or "ambrosia, the food and drink of Greek gods." Why translate inexactly into Greek? The Sanskrit for the drink of deathlessness of Indian gods may be unfamiliar to some readers at first, but its exactness is perfect.
- 1173 RL: I think the point is that they use the banana tree simile.
- 1174 RL: This is a common name of Avalokiteśvara; so, as elsewhere in this text, it is probably referring to Kalkī Puṇḍarīka.
- 1175 DSG: The fruit does not ripen until that degeneration occurs.
- 1176 RL: Because the absolute is self-emptiness, and because the absolute Buddha transcends relative conceptions of existence and non-existence.
- 1177 RL: In Sanskrit, lit. the "end," "limit," "edge," "apex," or "peak," *koṭi*, of "reality," *bhūta*; The Tibetan is *yang dag pa'i mtha*,' usually translated here as "the pure and true ultimate."
- 1178 DSG: Pervading space.
- 1179 RL: Hopkins, p343n says that Gelugpas doubt that Nāgārjuna wrote the *Akutoḥbhayā*, because it cites Nāgārjuna's student Āryadeva. This may be surprising, but it is hardly impossible.
- 1180 RL: Which comments on Nāgārjuna's *Root Verses on the Middle Way*, aka the *Mūla Prajñā*.
- 1181 DSG: That is, the relative.
- 1182 RL: OR having the quality of non-deception.
- 1183 DSG: If they are grasped.
- 1184 DSG: If they are conceptualized.
- 1185 DSG: By realization in the nonconceptual experience of meditation.
- 1186 DSG: By conceptualizing [pristine wisdom] as mind.
- 1187 RL: Because superimposed conceptions are pacified, the underlying real phenomena are seen as they are.

- 1188 DSG: Conceptions of permanence, impermanence, both, and neither.
- 1189 DSG: Therefore, our conceptual postulations of the view must be in accord with that.
- 1190 RL: *Srog*, literally life, can mean life-force, heart, or living being in appropriate contexts.
- 1191 RL: *'jig tshogs 'gag pa* without the notes would be read “stopping transitory collections.” The ultimate meaning is the same.
- 1192 RL: *Rnam par rig pa*, as Dölpopa says, is usually synonymous with consciousness, *rnam par shes pa*. It may also mean conceptual judgements or knowledge.
- 1193 RL: Hopkins, p. 348n, says that, according to the three bodhisattva commentaries, HRDAYA, heart or essence, is omitted from the assignments, because it is implicit in *kāya-vāk-citta*, body, speech, and mind.
- 1194 RL: The text. Here and below, says BADZRA, the typical Tibetan transcription.
- 1195 RL: My Tibetan text has ŚI ṬA, but below ŚIṬA and ŚID occur, to make the required one syllable.
- 1196 RL: Tārā.
- 1197 RL: The text wrongly has TAM.
- 1198 RL: *Dri rdo rje ma*, Vajra Smell Lady.
- 1199 RL: *Ro rdo rje ma*, Vajra Taste Lady.
- 1200 RL: *Gzugs rdo rje ma*, Vajra Sight Lady.
- 1201 RL: *Reg bya rdo rje ma*, Vajra Touchables Lady.
- 1202 RL: *Sgra rdo rje ma*, Vajra sound Lady.
- 1203 RL: *Chos khams rdo rje ma*, Vajra Constituent of Phenomena Lady.
- 1204 RL: *Rengs byed ma*, Stiffener or Paralyzer Lady.
- 1205 DSG: *Khengs byed ma*, Arrogance Lady pervading space.
- 1206 RL: *Rmugs byed ma*, Stupefying Lady.
- 1207 RL: *Shin tu brtson 'grus ma*, Extreme Exertion Lady.
- 1208 RL: *Shin tu sngon mo*, Extremely Blue Lady.
- 1209 RL: *Drag spyen ma*, Wrathful Eye Lady.
- 1210 RL: *Sumbha*, Doer of Harm.
- 1211 RL: *'Gegs mthar byed*, Obstruction (spirit) Terminator.
- 1212 RL: *Shes rab mthar byed*, Terminator by Prajñā.
- 1213 RL: *Pad ma mthar byed*, Lotus that is a Terminator.
- 1214 RL: *Shin rje mthar byed*, Terminator of the Lord of Death.
- 1215 RL: The five skandhas plus pristine wisdom.
- 1216 RL: Speaking, taking, walking, and emitting urine, excrement and male or female

sexual fluids.

- 1217 RL: Faculties of action of the mouth. arms, legs, anus, and the powers of urination and emitting sexual fluid.
- 1218 RL: Sow
- 1219 RL: Princess.
- 1220 RL: *Gtum mo*, also the name of inner heat yoga.
- 1221 RL: Supremely blue.
- 1222 RL: Supreme exertion. Tib. *Shin tu stobs ma*, Supremely Powerful Lady.
- 1223 RL: Vajra Iron Chain Lady.
- 1224 RL: I maker.
- 1225 RL: *Dbang po*. These are said to be intensified versions of the last group.
- 1226 RL: Stiffener or paralyzer Lady, *rengs byed ma*.
- 1227 Stupifier Lady, *rmugs byed ma*.
- 1228 RL: Light Rays Possessing Lady, *'od zer can ma*.
- 1229 RL: Lady possessing a Wrathful Grimace, *khro gnyer ma*.
- 1230 RL: Destroying eye Lady, *Drag spyen ma*.
- 1231 RL: Aśhvanamukhā, *khyi gdong ma*.
- 1232 RL: Kakamukhā, *ka ka gdong ma*.
- 1233 RL: Vyāghrīmukhā, *stag gdong ma*.
- 1234 RL: Ulukamukā, *'ug gdong ma*.
- 1235 RL: Sṛgālamukhā, *lce spyen gdong ma*.
- 1236 RL: Garuḍamukhā, *mkha' lding mdog ma*.
- 1237 RL: Sūkarīmukhā *phag gdong ma*.
- 1238 RL: Gṛidhramukhā, *bya rog gdong ma*.
- 1239 RL: Yogins taking low caste consorts indicates renunciation of attachment to prejudicial social values, like the caste system.
- 1240 RL: The Buddha is explaining this, in the *Kālacakra Tantra*, to Sucandra, Dharmarāja of Shambhala.
- 1241 RL: *'khor lo sdom pa*, Cakrasaṃvara.
- 1242 RL: This has the meaning of a level of being, like “sphere” in English.
- 1243 RL: Letter deities enumerated in the *Kālacakra*.
- 1244 RL: Hopkins, p. 352n says Mañjuśrīkīrti aka Kālacakrapāda and Narendrakīrti. I found Mañjughoṣanarendrakīrti, 'jam pa'i dbyangs ma'i dbang po grags pa, Brief Teaching Maintaining the View The Tibetan text cites 'jam dpal gyi lta 'dod mdor bstan pa. I found: Rang gi lta ba'i 'dod pa mdor bstan pa zhes bya ba, Pradarśanā numa toddeśa parīkṣā-nāma. Toh -. P 4610 Tengyur, rgyud 'grel, pu, 21a1-50b8

(vol.81, p.296 ff.).

- 1245 DSG: Of buddhahood.
- 1246 RL: *Phyogs*, “directions,” here is a code for ten, referring to the four main and four intermediate directions, with above and below making ten.
- 1247 RL: The divisions of things correspond to the divisions of deities.
- 1248 DSG: Tell the meaning.
- 1249 DSG: As the relative.
- 1250 DSG: As the absolute.
- 1251 DSG: As the compounded.
- 1252 DSG: As the [uncompounded] essence, *dharmatā*.
- 1253 DSG: Neither the speaker or spoken as compounded things, but the ground of these.
- 1254 RL: 1. formless meditation on the nature, 2. awareness of suchness including its qualities in subsequent attainment.
- 1255 RL: The additions are applied analogously for the rest of the passage.
- 1256 RL: Because defilements never existed.
- 1257 RL: The same notes apply throughout.
- 1258 RL: Or *Perfection of Prajñā Sūtras*.
- 1259 RL: Causal perfection of qualities of the path produces a fruition of separation, removing imperfect, relative qualities to reveal the corresponding eternal qualities of the fruition, as previously explained. The same is true for the following examples.
- 1260 RL: *Svābhavikakāya*.
- 1261 RL: Or a time when they are combined by an action of realization. The point is that fruition beyond conceptual divisions cannot be attained if there are still conceptual divisions.
- 1262 RL: ‘*pho med*’ can mean without sexual emission in appropriate contexts.
- 1263 RL: Exemplified by the melting of the HAM syllable into white blissful bindus from the heat of tummo meditation. That is changing, but it should not change into explicitly sexual bliss
- 1264 RL: *Kāya*.
- 1265 RL: They do not experience the pristine wisdom of the fruition, beyond the three times and three realms.
- 1266 RL: They can only help reveal it by a fruition of separation.
- 1267 DSG: Where everything is empty of its own essence.
- 1268 DSG: Because it is incidental and fabricated.
- 1269 DSG: Because it is the unfabricated essence, the natural state.

- 1270 DSG: Dharmatā, empty of all [relative] phenomena, [but possessing all the buddha qualities.]
- 1271 DSG: Nihilistic emptiness that is established as nothing at all.
- 1272 RL: Advocates of self-emptiness interpret “unborn” as meaning that phenomena never existed. Advocates of other-emptiness interpret “unborn,” for absolute phenomena, as meaning that they never arose, because they are eternal.
- 1273 RL: They are concerned with the meaning of conceptual, conventional terms.
- 1274 RL: Of realization.
- 1275 RL: Like the six realms, regarding gods and jealous gods as one realm.
- 1276 RL: All assertions, even those about absolute entities, are relative. Therefore, absolute truth can be fully realized in the experience of wisdom, but it cannot be fully described in literal language. Here, we must rely on the meaning, not the words.
- 1277 RL: Because language cannot be separated from being conceptual.
- 1278 RL: Because phenomena of the fruition are absolute. They are employable for the sake of attaining a fruition of separation of those absolute phenomena from incidental defilements of the relative.
- 1279 RL: Tathāgatagarbha.
- 1280 RL: The essence is indivisible from the absolute phenomena that are its qualities.
- 1281 RL: This metaphor may mean conditions and causes.
- 1282 RL: The sense is based on, but not the same as a Hindu Brahmanā.
- 1283 RL: Relationships between different religions were mutually adversarial in those days.
- 1284 RL: A fearless proclamation of definitive teachings. (The Indian lion and its roar are especially abundant in the Gir Forest.)
- 1285 RL: The faculty of the pristine wisdom sense.
- 1286 RL: *Kyi[s]*, invincibility of.
- 1287 RL: The connective particle *ste* is not commented on.
- 1288 RL: “Supreme” and “beyond” here have the same meaning as ‘other.’
- 1289 RL: In the rationale of mantra, the union of vowels and consonants through neutral letters that cross the line plays a significant part. For a Western comparison, consider the representation of the “unspeakable” name of God in Judaism YHVH.
- 1290 RL: *Thig le mi ‘pho* in appropriate contexts can refer to emission of sexual fluid and energy in both sexes. However analogous loss of energy is involved in all dualistic, relative action that involves casual power being transferred between phenomena in temporal successions of present moments. The loss ceases in the non-duality of fruition.
- 1291 RL: Between extremes, exemplified by sexual neutrality.
- 1292 RL: Nirmāṇakāya.

- 1293 RL: Sambhoga[kāya.]
- 1294 RL: Now extant only in quotes like this one.
- 1295 DSG: Primordial cessation of relative cause and effect.
- 1296 DSG: Their ultimate ground that is....
- 1297 DSG: Self whose nature is pristine wisdom.
- 1298 DSG: Primordial cessation of relative cause and effect.
- 1299 DSG: Other than the relative and supreme, and ff.
- 1300 DSG: Absolute skandhas and ff.
- 1301 RL: The ears.
- 1302 RL: The ‘other’ sense constituents, sense sources, and so forth.
- 1303 RL: The ultimate commitment to see everything as an aspect of the sacred absolute.
- 1304 RL: Ratnasambhava, who is like a wish-fulfilling gem.
- 1305 RL: Amitābha.
- 1306 RL: To transmute it into blissful pristine wisdom.
- 1307 RL: Arising as both the ‘other’ perceiver symbolized by the male deities and the ‘other’ objects, symbolized by the female deities.
- 1308 RL: The sixth element, the wisdom element.
- 1309 DSG: Of the truth of cessation, and possessing all its faculties.
- 1310 DSG: Or ‘other,’ asserted without contradiction.
- 1311 DSG: Of the truth of cessation.
- 1312 RL: Indians and Tibetans see the marks on the moon that Westerners see as the face of the “man in the moon” as a rabbit.
- 1313 RL: In this case, *prajñā* is the terminator, not what is terminated.
- 1314 RL: *Gnod mdzes rgyal po*, the King of Beautiful Harm.
- 1315 RL: *Dbyug pa sngon po*, Blue Club.
- 1316 RL: *‘Dod pa’i rgyal po*, King of Desire.
- 1317 RL: *Mi g.yo ba*, Unmoving.
- 1318 RL: *Stobs po che*, Great Power.
- 1319 RL: *Drag spyen ma*, Wrathful Eye Lady.
- 1320 RL: *‘Jigs ma*, Terrifying Lady.
- 1321 RL: *Chu tshod*, water-[clock] measures of twenty-four minutes.
- 1322 RL: Four petals of the sixty-four of the navel cakra are called “empty,” because the winds do not move in them except at death and in special yogic meditations.
- 1323 RL: 4 empty petals + 8 principals + 54 retinue = 66, so there seem to be two

extra.

1324 RL: As lunar months, they do not correspond exactly to the months of the Western calendar.

1325 RL: Omitting five pristine wisdom days, corresponding to inner pristine wisdom winds.

1326 RL: A Kālacakra year has 360 days with five extra days for the five empty topics.

1327 RL: *‘Dod ma*, Desire Lady.

1328 RL: These are depicted in the charnel grounds that encircle the maṇḍala palace.

1329 RL: Listed in Khentrul Rinpoche’s Shentong book. They are related to those of Sāṃkhya.

1330 RL: Which reduces the great bliss to a mere transitory instant fixated in terms of spatio-temporal and qualitative reference points.

1331 RL: That is the existence of the ground empty of other. If the absolute is empty of itself, “existence” can only be “delusive saṃsāric existence.”

1332 RL: Because phenomena are not isolated self-natures, but are a unified interdependent field. This can be expressed by saying that every object of the three times exists within every other, and this is actually seen by the wisdom eye.

1333 RL: That sees the emptiness of the relative.

1334 RL: Which realizes interdependence and its implications for emptiness of self and other.

1335 RL: That sees the non-dual ultimate.

1336 DSG: Regarding these phenomena of the truth of cessation.

1337 DSG: Like space, which is impossible for [phenomena of] relative consciousness.

1338 RL: Eight relative qualities of the sun and moon: Qualities of the male and female energies of the winds of the side channels lalanā and rasanā that have not been non-dually united in the central channel. The ordinary siddhis or miraculous attainments of a yogin may be attained, but not those of supreme siddhi, enlightenment. I do not know this list, but it may be like the Eight qualities of great celestial (godlike) activity.

1339 RL: This includes relative bliss generated by ordinary meditation practice.

1340 RL: There is a temporary introduction to what the great bliss of fruition is like in the equanimity following orgasm.

1341 RL: Thamas, one of the three qualities, guṇas, of Sāṃkhya, and an analogous quality in the *Kālacakra*.

1342 DSG: Absolute.

1343 DSG: Pervading their lesser relative mind.

1344 RL: Cf. Hopkins’ translation of Nāgārjuna’s Precious Garland, (406c-412) also in Hopkins, p389n-390n.

1345 DSG: Supreme and ‘other.’

- 1346 DSG: This should be understood in terms of the two truths to mean that absolute ignorance and so forth are aspects of indestructible, ultimate dharmatā.
- 1347 RL: “Glorious” is part of the title here.
- 1348 DSG: Of the absolute truth of cessation.
- 1349 DSG: Of the absolute truth of cessation.
- 1350 DSG: Pervading space.
- 1351 DSG: Of the absolute truth of cessation.
- 1352 DSG: Of the truth of cessation and ff.
- 1353 RL: Because the relative world has no essence at all.
- 1354 RL: In the senses of 1. being mutually compatible aspects of a single essence and 2. Manifesting at the same time and place.
- 1355 RL: As opposed to maintaining that such an assertion is absolute truth, according to the logical absolute of the second turning. That logical principle is not a phenomenon that could be empty or non-empty.
- 1356 RL: The phrasing must be careful. That the emptiness of relative phenomena is absolutely true logically is correct. But neither such empty phenomena nor the logical truth of their self-emptiness can exist as Dōlpopa’s existent absolute empty of other.
- 1357 RL: Even those that are deceptive, evil, and so forth from a relative viewpoint.
- 1358 DSG: Seeing the essence of absolute real things, [within the absolute truth of cessation.]
- 1359 DSG: Relative things of the truths of suffering and origin.
- 1360 DSG: Knowing absolute things as real [and knowing relative things as empty,] by perceiving them [with pristine wisdom].
- 1361 RL: In the absolute sense explained above, where the ground is said to be the cause of the fruition.
- 1362 RL: Even before they realize the absolute that is the object of their faith and devotion, the relative merit of that faith produces rebirth in the celestial realms.
- 1363 DSG: Of the profound ultimate way things are.
- 1364 RL: In a bad way, like throwing out the baby with the bath water.
- 1365 RL: According to the usual liturgy, from the belief that doing this multiple times multiplies the power of the liturgy of arousing bodhicitta.
- 1366 RL: In the celestial realms.
- 1367 RL: This was taught in the god realms.
- 1368 RL: In regard to relative essences.
- 1369 RL: Or they assert that non-conceptual dharmatā is essenceless in the sense that the conventionally conceptualized word “dharmatā” has no referent that is a relative real thing.
- 1370 RL: The union of vowels and consonants, which is also the union of the male and

female energies.

1371 RL: *Nyi tshe*, literally “one day life,” like a may fly. According to common Buddhist views, Indian extremists acknowledge that some possible things do not exist in fact, like the horns of a rabbit, and some things are logically impossible like the son of a barren woman. However, they have no argument establishing the emptiness of all describable phenomena, as in the Buddhist approach to emptiness. However, even this text mentions exceptions like the naked Jains.

1372 RL: *Chos thams cad kyis stong pa'i phyir*. Here phenomena = relative phenomena. It cannot include absolute phenomena empty of other, as just below it says that dharmatā being empty is impossible.

1373 RL: Is dharmatā a dharma or knowable phenomenon? That is what is required for the objection to be true. As Dölpopa says, the common usage in this case is that dharmatā, the nature of phenomena is not considered to be a phenomenon. A possible source of confusion is that the word “dharmatā” and its conceptual meaning in conventional language are knowable phenomena that are empty of themselves.

1374 RL: Relative phenomena that are other than absolute buddha qualities and so forth.

1375 RL: The relative and the absolute are incompatible. Therefore, if absolute dharmatā is the how things are, relative phenomena are refuted.

1376 DSG: Because they accept either 1. or 2. just above.

1377 RL: This may be acceptable as a way of saying that the assertions involved are invalid.

1378 DSG: Perfectly established dharmatā.

1379 DSG: The imagined and the dependent.

1380 DSG: The ultimate three jewels.

1381 Thinking that compounded things are dharmakāya.

1382 DSG: Thinking that if the absolute is empty of itself, bliss will exist absolutely; though it will not in that case, [nor will anything else.]

1383 DSG: Maintaining that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are inseparable.

1384 DSG: For example, deprecating sugatagarbha as impure.

1385 DSG: For example, maintaining that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are inseparable.

1386 DSG: For example, maintaining that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are inseparable.

1387 DSG: For example, maintaining that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are inseparable.

1388 DSG: For example, saying that buddhahood does not exist in the fundamental way things are.

1389 DSG: For example, saying that those who maintain that pure selfhood exists are like Indian extremists.

1390 DSG: For example, the heavy evil deed of saying that buddhahood does not exist in the fundamental way things are.

- 1391 DSG: For example, by deprecating sugatagarbha.
- 1392 DSG: For example, saying that buddhahood is absent in the fundamental way things are.
- 1393 DSG: For example, by saying that the middle path that abandons extremes is impossible.
- 1394 DSG: For example, by saying that there is liberation by viewing everything as empty of itself.
- 1395 DSG: For example, by deprecating sugatagarbha.
- 1396 DSG: For example, by saying that everything being empty is dharmakāya.
- 1397 DSG: For example, by maintaining that the [ordinary] five poisons are the five pristine wisdoms.
- 1398 DSG: Like saying that if the pure self is maintained, the temporal result will be like being an extremist.
- 1399 DSG: Like viewing discursive thoughts as dharmakāya.
- 1400 DSG: For example, by deprecating sugatagarbha.
- 1401 DSG: For example, by deprecating the true self.
- 1402 DSG: For example, maintaining that emptiness of self is the absolute.
- 1403 For example, deprecating the absolute empty of other.
- 1404 DSG: For example, deprecating the absolute empty of other.
- 1405 DSG: Like saying that the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* was not abridged in translation.
- 1406 DSG: Like spurious tantras composed in Tibet.
- 1407 RL: Variant omits “seeing all” and adds: “The completely pure and completely impure.”
- 1408 RL: Relative phenomena, and ff.
- 1409 RL: Or absolute phenomena that are qualities of dharmatā, and ff.
- 1410 RL: To say the Hindus do not teach a universal self would be bizarrely wrong. However, they do not define such a self in Buddhist terms.
- 1411 RL: This does not refer to orbits and space, which the Buddha teaches in the *Kālacakra*, but celestial bodies appearing to make little circles in the sky for a drunken person.
- 1412 RL: Since elsewhere it is taught that the world-transcending absolute is non-conceptual, and that all language is conceptual, there must be a sense in which the non-conceptual is expressible in concepts. Whatever it is, the preceding sentence is an example.
- 1413 RL: *Chos*. Dölpopa notes *chos nyid*, changing dharmas to dharmatā.
- 1414 RL: The armor of virtues that protect against negative actions and states.
- 1415 RL: Subject to change.
- 1416 RL: Cat’s eye works well here.

- 1417 RL: For example, the dharmakāya Buddha is not separate from the retinue, the sambhogakāya Buddha is separate only in perceived sense qualities, and the nirmāṇakāya Buddha is separate from the retinue,
- 1418 RL: The roots are the absolute, innate versions. The mounts are karmic winds and wisdom winds that support the conditioned absolute and relative version. It is worth noting that the details of the translation in Hopkins, p. 416, differ in many details from mine, though the ultimate points about differentiating absolute and relative, with the aspects of each, seem similar.
- 1419 RL: As extensively presented above.
- 1420 RL: As extensively presented above.
- 1421 RL: Conditioned teachings of the path and fruition in all vehicles involve cause and effect. The logical absolute of the second turning and the experiential absolute of the third turning and tantra are beyond cause and effect.
- 1422 RL: Due to diseases like jaundice.
- 1423 DSG: In formerly practicing the path.
- 1424 DSG: Making these efforts for many eons.
- 1425 DSG: Through appropriate antidotes.
- 1426 DSG: An explanation in more detail of the previous verse.
- 1427 RL: As well known to be required for bodhisattvas by the teachings.
- 1428 DSG: Mastering the ten bodhisattva levels and even the subtlest obscurations hindering that.
- 1429 RL: Possessed and gathered as long as beginningless saṃsāra revolved.
- 1430 RL: Associated with the pristine wisdom of the path.
- 1431 DSG: By exhausting appearances of incidental defilements, phenomena of changeless suchness alone appear.
- 1432 DSG: [Totally,] utterly, completely....
- 1433 DSG: With its many objects, [that directly experiences non-dual emptiness in formless meditation.]
- 1434 DSG: [Seeing things non-dually as they are] in subsequent attainment after that meditation.
- 1435 RL: Naturally present luminosity, existing as experience of pristine wisdom.
- 1436 RL: Which is non-existent, like space.
- 1437 RL: Aspects of action: doer, doing, and what is done.
- 1438 DSG: Those without the pristine wisdom of meditation do not see these things.
- 1439 RL: In extent.
- 1440 RL: In its number of qualities.
- 1441 DSG: Which is attained as absolute dharmakāya.
- 1442 DSG: Ripening practitioners in the great Vehicle and giving prophesies of their

later supreme enlightenment.

- 1443 DSG: Those who will attain enlightenment as buddhas and...
- 1444 DSG: The qualities of the [two kinds of] fruitions of 1. separation of relative defilements and 2. ripening until the capacity is present to realize the [absolute] essence and to adorn it with [relative] attainments of knowledge and power of the form kāyas. [These are each thirty-two, making 64.]
- 1445 DSG: This verse explains the last.
- 1446 RL: Of incidental defilements, by the path.
- 1447 DSG: [Unlike dharmakāya,] this relative kāya [is causally produced by the path.]
- 1448 RL: Under which relative phenomena are classified.
- 1449 DSG: Absolute [dharmakāya benefits oneself, independently of support.]
- 1450 DSG: The two relative form kāyas benefit others, [depending on support by dharmakāya.]
- 1451 RL: The highest form realm of the interpenetrating, selfless phenomena of sambhogakāya.
- 1452 RL: These include buddhas as supreme nirmāṇakāyas, but also all other emanations of persons that benefit beings, and even beneficial material things.
- 1453 RL: Svābhavikakāya. Another absolute kāya that is regarded as an aspect of dharmakāya, when three kāyas are listed.
- 1454 RL: Sambhogakāya.
- 1455 RL: Nirmāṇakāya.
- 1456 RL: Of body, speech, mind, and pristine wisdom.
- 1457 RL: Of the four truths, among the sixteen instants knowledge of the path of seeing.
- 1458 DSG: The arising of these different assemblies of deities is without contradiction or incongruity, [as they explain and personify different ones of the limitless aspects of the essence.]
- 1459 DSG: Therefore, it is resolved as being the single kāya that is the fundamental way things are.
- 1460 DSG: Within those two kāyas, [the three refuges, Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha, have both relative and absolute forms.]
- 1461 DSG: Sambhogakāya.
- 1462 DSG: [Nirmāṇakāya.] The occasions of these three kāyas...
- 1463 DSG: Svābhavikakāya and sambhogakāya.
- 1464 DSG: Nirmāṇakāya.
- 1465 RL: The relative form kāyas.
- 1466 DSG: Kāyas.
- 1467 DSG: That is, these are the occasions of the five kāyas.

- 1468 DSG: The ‘other’ or supreme *nirmāṇakāya* of the buddha lord or self.
- 1469 DSG: Absolute sounds, [exemplifying communication and mantric power.]
- 1470 DSG: The ‘other’ or supreme *sambhogakāya* of the buddha lord or self.
- 1471 RL: Parsing *chos sku* as “sphere of absolute qualities.”
- 1472 DSG: Of the absolute.
- 1473 DSG: Of the absolute.
- 1474 DSG: [The *Mahāsukhakāya*,] making five absolute *kāyas*. [Even the relative *kāyas* are part of the absolute essence from this perspective, as elsewhere the five *skandhas*, and so forth, are.]
- 1475 DSG: Collections of many ordinary phenomena.
- 1476 DSG: Or accumulation of many absolute phenomena or qualities, [listed elsewhere in the text.]
- 1477 RL: Regarded as the luminosity aspect of non-dual *dharmakāya*, because phenomena do not go beyond the absolute essence.
- 1478 RL: The beginning of *sūtras* and many *tantras*, “Thus have I...,” as exemplified previously in the text.
- 1479 RL: Body, speech, mind, and pristine wisdom or outer, inner, secret, and ‘other.’
- 1480 RL: The four immeasurables, when they are not made immeasurable by emptiness.
- 1481 RL: Of body, speech, mind, and pristine wisdom.
- 1482 RL: *Śravakas*, *Pratyekabuddhas*, *bodhisattvas*, and *buddhas*.
- 1483 RL: Later identified by *Dōlpopa* as Lesser Vehicle schools, *Stavira*, *Sarvāstivāda*, *Sammitiya*, and *Mahāsaṃghika*.
- 1484 RL: *Mun pa* = *thamas* from the three qualities, *guṇas*.
- 1485 RL: The essence of mantra, like an insubstantial echo, beyond the fixated solidity of the relative.
- 1486 RL: Communicating symbolically, in the way individual beings will best understand.
- 1487 DSG: But a third alternative without contradiction.
- 1488 DSG: As the absolute ground of emptiness [of other.]
- 1489 DSG: The middle, innate joy, abandoning desire for the light side and desireless for the dark side.
- 1490 DSG: But a neutral intermediate.
- 1491 DSG: Other than relative.
- 1492 RL: Of conceptualized *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*
- 1493 RL: The essence in itself is without aspects, but manifests as all aspects.
- 1494 RL: *Kālacakra*, with its detailed absolute characteristics.
- 1495 DSG: Four syllables teaching four *kāyas*. *Kā* is the peaceful cause, [*dharmakāya*].

It dissolves into LA as sambhogakāya.

- 1496 DSG: From CA comes the excellent qualities of moving mind, [nirmāṇakāya.]
- 1497 DSG: From KRA comes the binding together of the aspects [as svābhavikakāya.]
- 1498 DSG: Half of half of sixteen.
- 1499 DSG: Not abiding on the dark side.
- 1500 DSG: Of the light side, as innate joy and pristine wisdom.
- 1501 DSG: The fourth innate joy of the changeless nature.
- 1502 DSG: Ultimate desire, innate joy.
- 1503 DSG: Bliss of the changeless nature, the immovable svābhavikakāya and so forth.
- 1504 RL: The various aspects of the conditioned, temporary bliss of sexual union.
- 1505 DSG: The earlier time of [a sentient being], when the essence is defiled, and the later time [of a buddha], when the essence is undefiled.
- 1506 RL: Yoga, in Tibetan *rnal 'byor*, is literally union of the natural state.
- 1507 RL: That are so united.
- 1508 DSG: Samaya, *dam tshig*, is the supreme Word of the absolute, binding relative opposites into ultimate union.
- 1509 RL: Accomplished by stopping the twelve cycles of life prāṇa by vajra yoga, as described in the Inner Kālacakra. Cf. Hopkins, p436n.
- 1510 RL: Four and so forth.
- 1511 RL: The vajra of...
- 1512 DSG: [Among the four gates of] complete liberation.
- 1513 DSG: Of complete liberation.
- 1514 DSG: Of complete liberation.
- 1515 RL: So that it can manifest where it is required for buddha activity.
- 1516 DSG: As one.
- 1517 RL: The Buddha connected the four yogas to these four kinds of sattva respectively. 1. Vajra, 2. bodhi or enlightenment, 3. the great 'other,' and 4. binding in samaya, as previously explained. Hopkins, p. 436n, p. 438n, cites detailed Gelug commentaries. He also inserts considerable commentary by Dölpopa into the text of this section. That might be helpful, as Dölpopa's comments here are minimal.
- 1518 RL: For example, compare enlightened mind *byang chub sems*, and *byang chub sems dpa'*, bodhisattva or being / hero of enlightened mind.
- 1519 RL: The common three are emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness. As just above, the four adds uncompoundedness.
- 1520 RL: Nirmāṇakāya.
- 1521 DSG: The pristine wisdoms of body, speech, and mind are united as one, as are the

four joys of emanation, [nirmāṇakāya.]

1522 RL: Sambhogakāya.

1523 DSG: The pristine wisdoms of body, speech, and mind are united as one, as are the four joys of perfect enjoyment, [sambhogakāya.]

1524 RL: Dharmakāya.

1525 DSG: The pristine wisdoms of body, speech, and mind are united as one, as are the four joys of dharmakāya.

1526 RL: The kāya of coemergence.

1527 DSG: The pristine wisdoms of body, speech, and mind are united as one, as are the four joys of the essence.

1528 DSG: [The four] occasions [of relative life.]

1529 DSG: The cakras of the navel, heart, throat, and forehead, respectively.

1530 RL: Practice generating bliss with a physical consort.

1531 RL: As conditioned attainment of the pristine wisdom of the path.

1532 RL: One of the examples of illusion.

1533 DSG: Of prajñā and skillful means, bliss and emptiness, object and perceiver, support and supported, emptiness and compassion, and so forth.

1534 DSG: [Absolute,] great emptiness.

1535 DSG: The great emptiness.

1536 DSG: Of great bliss, [said to be] 'other' case and effect, [just above.]

1537 DSG: The great emptiness.

1538 DSG: Absolute great bliss.

1539 RL: Because absolute prajñā is absolute and changeless, its 'other' effects must also be absolute.

1540 DSG: Is self-arising and...

1541 RL: Because, in essence, they are both the single absolute, great emptiness. In that sense, they are synonyms.

1542 RL: They are meaningful and applicable only in the context of excluding their opposites.

1543 RL: Or dharmas = qualities, if you parse dharmakāya that way.

1544 RL: Variant: the four knowledges / vajras.

1545 RL: *Rnam par nyed pa*. The dictionary meanings, rubbing, massage, crushing, suffering, are not very clear. The Sanskrit vimarda has similar meanings. In the context of successive moments of ripening various fixated phenomena into realization of the essence, this may mean gradually softening their conceptual hardness, so that they are "massaged," or perhaps sometimes, more forcibly crushed, into realization. We stop anesthetizing ourselves against a world we expect to attack us, and open ourselves to relating with it as a consort.

- 1546 RL: *Ngar bshad / byed* here means engaging the vocal cords and first producing sound at the beginning of expressing the power of speech. This is invoking the power of mantric vibration.
- 1547 RL: This is projecting the power fully articulated mantric sound.
- 1548 RL: We experience the accomplishing action of mantra, where all phenomena are engulfed in the pure absolute.
- 1549 RL: The fruition manifests fully as the intrinsically blissful essence with its buddha qualities.
- 1550 RL: *Bde ba*, bliss. Error. Variant *sde ba* school, correct. In introductory phrase that was not translated *sde ba bzhi rnams te*. (There are) four schools....
- 1551 RL: These are also visualized as four stacked seats of Kālacakra.
- 1552 RL: Transitions where the life wind successively moves in different petals of the cakras mentioned. These are explained in the *Inner Chapter of the Kālacakra*.
- 1553 RL: Times of day when certain combinations of channels, winds, and essences predominate.
- 1554 RL: Intoxicating blissful enjoyment strengthens purity and weakens defilement.
- 1555 RL: Predominance builds to a climactic dissolving of boundaries and opposites so that purity and bliss engulf everything in a blissful drop on the level of formless meditation. Trungpa Rinpoche XI said “engollup.”
- 1556 RL: This is full manifestation of the fruition on the level of subsequent attainment.
- 1557 RL: Vajra, ratna, padma, and karma.
- 1558 RL: *Zhi ba*, a phonetic description.
- 1559 RL: *Byin za*, the god Agni, who eats or consumes offerings.
- 1560 RL: Bodhisattva.
- 1561 RL: The different kinds of sattva above.
- 1562 DSG: Of the absolute truth of cessation, and ff.
- 1563 RL: As elsewhere in the text, Dōlpopa quotes only the first line.
- 1564 RL: There is no more leaning because buddhahood has been attained. The *Sublime Continuum* says the wisdom of bodhisattvas is the same as that of the buddhas in content, but the difference in scope is like that between the water in an ox track and an ocean. Gelug critics often dispute whether the content can really be really same, and whether bodhisattvas who still have some obscurations really see things as they are, as the Buddhas do, if they do.
- 1565 DSG: It is unlimited in place and direction, and is always possessed at all times.
- 1566 RL: Literally, *ma rmongs*, whose meaning is very like “unobscured by.”
- 1567 DSG: Because it is unobscured.
- 1568 RL: *Rnam pa med pa*, in Yogācāra free from imputed, intrinsically separate objects, especially physical objects that are other than mind, as opposed to a play of aspects of color and shape in a single mirror.

- 1569 RL: *Rgyu mtshan*, the reason why they exist, on the level of where absolute being can be called a cause.
- 1570 RL: The ground of sambhogakāya.
- 1571 DSG: This pristine wisdom is called “mirror-like” because the [phenomena of the] other pristine wisdoms arise in it like reflections.
- 1572 DSG: As a [transcendent] cause.
- 1573 DSG: The essence of pristine wisdom that is to be attained.
- 1574 RL: Not dwelling in conceptual extremes like self and other, or emptiness and non-emptiness, or self-emptiness and other emptiness, but focusing on the single essence that is equally the essence of all phenomena.
- 1575 RL: Not hindered from knowing them.
- 1576 DSG: Apprehension of Dharma that was heard [causes the mirror-like pristine wisdom.]
- 1577 DSG: [Equal attitude toward] all sentient beings [cultivated in meditation causes the pristine wisdom of equality.]
- 1578 RL: The result is discriminating awareness pristine wisdom that knows what exists and what does not exist as they are.
- 1579 RL: The result of the other wisdoms is all-accomplishing pristine wisdom.
- 1580 RL: Compare the discussion of *rnam pa med pa* above.
- 1581 RL: Of the relative.
- 1582 RL: Of conceptualized, relative phenomena.
- 1583 RL: As a succession of relative instants.
- 1584 RL: The seed syllable of speech.
- 1585 DSG: Primordially and naturally.
- 1586 DSG: Those “without names of relative things.” [But having the names of absolute things are still non-existent objects of relative concepts.]
- 1587 DSG: As the ground of non-existence.
- 1588 RL: Or all-accomplishing action.
- 1589 DSG: From the unchanging viewpoint of eternity that is the absolute.
- 1590 RL: Only absolute buddhahood.
- 1591 DSG: Beyond the number of grains of sand in the river Ganges.
- 1592 DSG: Primordially [not covered by] defilements.
- 1593 RL: Hopkins has commentary that brings out different aspects of the meaning that are relevant to his exposition.
- 1594 RL: In a good way, relaxing tensions fixations through fear of constant suffering.
- 1595 RL: Which becomes the creativity of mantra.
- 1596 RL: Released as limitless buddha qualities.

- 1597 RL: This kind of consciousness becomes pristine wisdom. Transformations of the fourth occasion is like ultimate nirvāṇa going beyond limited, conceptualized nirvāṇa that is opposed to saṃsāra.
- 1598 RL: Loosed from the confines of the inherent duality of the obscuration of knowables embodied as the relative all ground.
- 1599 RL: Of relative causation.
- 1600 RL: Where phenomena and their universal power seem to be restricted to a single, lifeless point-instant.
- 1601 RL: In mere tantalizing instants, like baited hooks, causing further suffering when they vanish.
- 1602 RL: Karmic energies in the lalanā and rasanā channels. the eight are probably the eight qualities of mastery of buddhahood.
- 1603 RL: The powers of sense and action unleashed as absolute deities.
- 1604 RL: Of phenomena unbound.
- 1605 RL: Of nirvāṇa and saṃsāra, respectively.
- 1606 RL: Vajrasattva.
- 1607 RL: Which for buddhas manifests as spontaneous buddha activity.
- 1608 RL: Like those of Vajrasattva.
- 1609 RL: Shapes and Sanskrit syllables.
- 1610 RL: Absolute qualities without relative qualities.
- 1611 RL: Androgynous.
- 1612 RL: Symbolic absolute male and female qualities.
- 1613 RL: The dharmadhātu pristine wisdom, as pristine wisdom itself.
- 1614 DSG: [Space,] of the absolute truth of cessation.
- 1615 DSG: Of the absolute truth of cessation.
- 1616 DSG: Of the absolute truth of cessation.
- 1617 RL: ‘Other’ consciousnesses.
- 1618 RL: As elsewhere in the text, Dōlpopa quotes only the first line.
- 1619 RL: Absolute dharmatā.
- 1620 RL: Relative Sambhogakāya.
- 1621 DSG: By many [phenomena] having the one taste [of the single nature.]
- 1622 DSG: That can know what is difficult to know [by those who have not realized the non-dual nature.]
- 1623 DSG: Sambhogakāya, because it consists of qualities causally related to the nature, as ‘other’ causes.
- 1624 RL: Absolute svābhavikakāya.

- 1625 DSG: Existing in the fundamental nature, [but not innately.]
- 1626 RL: They are pure from all incidental defilements, even though their purity were attained through relative causes.
- 1627 DSG: Unfabricated, innate [qualities of the essence that do not need to be attained or purified.]
- 1628 DSG: As having this collection of qualities of the truth of cessation.
- 1629 RL: Kāya.
- 1630 RL: So the Buddha addresses Sucandra, the first Dharmarāja of Shambhala.
- 1631 RL: Usually of or including bodhisattvas that are different in manifestation from the teacher, but the same in essence, and therefore are called “half emanations.”
- 1632 RL: By truly abiding in and sometimes manifesting the highest sambhogakāya pure land.
- 1633 RL: Like the five victorious ones of the five families, the first buddha, and so forth.
- 1634 RL: Of the conditioned luminosity of Sambhogakāya.
- 1635 RL: Conditioned buddha activity, as opposed to the changeless, absolute pristine wisdom of all-accomplishing action.
- 1636 RL: Sambhogakāya.
- 1637 DSG: The palms and soles have thousand-spoked wheels with hubs.
- 1638 DSG: Flat like a turtle’s belly.
- 1639 DSG: Like a duck.
- 1640 DSG: 1-4. The backs of the hands and feet, 5-6. The shoulder blades, 7. The nape of the neck.
- 1641 DSG: As the *Mother* explains it, the body is seven hands high, straight and good smelling.
- 1642 DSG: The tips stick up and coil to the right.
- 1643 DSG: Clean lined, not irregular, compact like bamboo, or stalked plants.
- 1644 DSG: Though the body is not stooped, the palms reach to the knee-caps.
- 1645 DSG: Like an elephant.
- 1646 DSG: Growing from every pore.
- 1647 DSG: Between the eyebrows, like 32 fine strands of white cotton or silk, coiling to the right.
- 1648 DSG: Big, with a large chest.
- 1649 DSG: The Uṣṇīṣa, extending upward like a parasol
- 1650 DSG: Very melodious, and capable of reaching all the inner and outer retinue.
- 1651 DSG: Both above and below the eyes.
- 1652 DSG: A king of swans.

- 1653 RL: Because he is not distressed.
- 1654 RL: In relation to the hips.
- 1655 RL: A red berry
- 1656 DSG: The sūtras say “good ears with long earlobes,” but ears that are good in length and equal is also acceptable.
- 1657 RL: At the hairline.
- 1658 RL: *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, Toh 3786 Tengyur, sher phyin, ka, Maitreya, 8:21, f12A:6.
- 1659 RL: Indian cuckoo.
- 1660 RL: This is usually said to be an Indian jay, but Dölpopa notes *srog chags*, worm or insect.
- 1661 RL: An Indian bird, variously translated as sandpiper, stock dove, plover, lapwing, wood-pigeon, pewit, and swallow.
- 1662 RL: *Bos gavoëus*, wild cattle.
- 1663 RL: Śākti.
- 1664 RL: Dhṛtarāṣṭra, one of the Four Great Heavenly Kings, *caturmahārājikā*. Protector of the Eastern direction, and god of music. The name means 'Guardian of the Environment, and it is possible that this refers to a generic guardian.
- 1665 RL: Mig mi bzang, eyes not good.
- 1666 RL: *Pennisetum flaccidum* griseb or *Cynodon dactylon*. fine green lawn grass, one of eight auspicious objects of the Hindus
- 1667 DSG: That have been taught.
- 1668 DSG: The [absolute] kāya of the nature and [relative] sambhogakāya [respectively, or sometimes the second is said to be the form kāyas. Hopkins, p. 464n, cites several other interpretations of these lines.]
- 1669 DSG: Objects that benefit people, like a beautiful-sounding vina, [a big fish auspiciously caught by one in need, lanterns emanated along a dark path and so forth.]
- 1670 RL: The reincarnated tülkus called “rinpoches.”
- 1671 DSG: Supreme nirmāṇakāyas, [the buddhas.]
- 1672 RL: It says “objections”, but not all the questions are objections.
- 1673 RL: Of the absolute.
- 1674 RL: Composed of instantaneous phenomena.
- 1675 RL: In the temporal succession of the relative.
- 1676 DSG: The relative form kāyas are not one, and absolute dharmakāya is not many; [nor is it one relative thing, for that matter,]
- 1677 DSG: Whether the Buddha exists or not.
- 1678 DSG: We should not say without qualification either “The Buddha exists” or “The

Buddha does not exist,” but make the neutral reply “The Buddha is not existent and not non-existent.”

- 1679 DSG: [Causing illusory hairs to fall before the eyes, floaters in the eyes may be present at one time and] “pacified,” [or not present at another. Therefore, it is incorrect to say without qualification that they exist or do not exist.]
- 1680 RL: The ultimate.
- 1681 DSG: We should not say that Buddhahood exists inseparably within conceptual mind and that it does not exist inseparably within pristine wisdom. [For mind in general neither is correct.]
- 1682 RL: Absent.
- 1683 RL: Depending on the presence or absence of appropriate cause and conditions, like fuel and a spark.
- 1684 DSG: Depending on the presence or [absence of appropriate cause and conditions] of good fortune, [like merit and good aspirations.]
- 1685 DSG: Because they are rotten, and so forth.
- 1686 DSG: Also unfortunate by having little understanding.
- 1687 RL: At least, not without explaining it properly.
- 1688 RL: There it can be said “It exists in the pristine wisdom of the noble ones, and does not fail to exist.” The tricky question here is how this reconciles two assertions of Madhyamaka accepted by Dölpopa that 1. the absolute is beyond conceptual assertion and denial, and 2. that concepts are involved in all assertions, including those about absolute phenomena. Contradiction can be avoided here only by classifying these two statements as belonging to different levels of discourse. Resolving the disputes between advocates of self-emptiness and other emptiness depends on giving a clear account of such a distinction that both sides could accept.
- 1689 DSG: [Conceptual descriptions of] the fundamental way things are.
- 1690 RL: Quite literally, if you think about the history of the Jonangpa school.
- 1691 DSG: The fundamental way things are.
- 1692 DSG: The fundamental way things are.
- 1693 RL: There would be many such contradictions.
- 1694 RL: Within relative truth.
- 1695 DSG: In the fundamental nature.
- 1696 RL: In conventional conceptual discourse you should correctly assert what exists and does not exist (etc.), in both the relative and absolute as it is.
- 1697 RL: Do not try make absolutely valid assertions about the ultimate nature, because it is beyond assertion and denial. In attempting to do this you would say something incoherent, like trying to describe the child of a barren woman.
- 1698 DSG: There is relative nirvāṇa, due to [conditioned] cessation of what is to be abandoned, by antidotes. Relative nirvāṇa does not exist in the fundamental nature, because the nirvāṇa that exists in the fundamental nature [is absolute

cessation that primordially abandons] antidotes.

1699 DSG: Of qualities that were not present before.

1700 DSG: So that it will not be refuted by reasoning.

1701 DSG: By self-aware pristine wisdom.

1702 RL: Hopkins correctly notes, p. 471n, that authorities like Snellgrove place this line as the end of the preceding verse. The Tibetan Dölpopa cites, differs in many particulars from Snellgrove's Sanskrit and his translation of it. You may judge whether Dölpopa is correct that the thought here continues over several verses from the context in Snellgrove: (30) *As relative, white as white jasmine; as absolute, essentially blissful; it arises in the lotus-paradise, which is symbolized by the word EVAM.* (31) *We call it paradise or land of bliss (Sukhāvati) because of this bliss it is the keeper, for it is the home of all buddhas, bodhisattvas and vajra-holders. f. (32) Such as is saṃsāra, such is nirvana. There is no nirvana other than saṃsāra, we say. (33) Saṃsāra consists in form and sound and so on, in feeling and the other four skandhas, in the faculties of sense, in wrath and illusion and the other three. (34) But all these elements are really sunk in nirvana, and it is only from delusion that they appear as saṃsāra. The wise man continues in saṃsāra, but this saṃsāra is recognized as nirvana, for he has brought this about by the process of purification. (35) This nirvana, being the thought of enlightenment, is both absolute and relative in form.*

1703 DSG: Or protector

1704 RL: The blissful, padma family pure land of Amitābha.

1705 DSG: This dharmadhātu of the truth of cessation that is Sukhāvati.

1706 RL: When deluded concepts are projected onto it.

1707 DSG: With the aspect of saṃsāra.

1708 DSG: Primordially.

1709 DSG:...Both... is also a good translation. [Union here is like 1+0=1.]

1710 DSG: What is the intention of saying that? It is as follows.

1711 DSG: Purity and truth.

1712 DSG: Purity and truth.

1713 DSG: Body (honorific), sku = chos sku, dharmakāya.

1714 RL: That is the absolute way things are.

1715 RL: Of the four kāyas, vajras, and so forth, as presented above.

1716 RL: The intention is the relation of the three natures to the essence that is equally the essence of all phenomena.

1717 DSG: Relative phenomena.

1718 DSG: Phenomena, *chos, de nyid*, usually "that itself, but here meaning the essence or ground of phenomena *chos nyid*, dharmatā.

1719 DSG: The relative, [because it does not truly exist.]

1720 DSG: The absolute.

- 1721 RL: That is, conceptualize.
- 1722 DSG: [The natural meditation that is nonconceptual] pristine wisdom.
- 1723 DSG: Because they perceive no attainment in [realizing that their own nature was always] dharmatā.
- 1724 DSG: In generosity [with material things and the teachings.]
- 1725 RL: There is a variety of ways of presenting these profound topics in verbal concepts that are in accord with the interests and capacities of beings.
- 1726 RL: *Smon nas mkhyen pa*, knowledge of phenomena arising just from directing attention to them and aspiring to know..
- 1727 RL: Such as the ordinary siddhis.
- 1728 DSG: Who the individuals benefited are, the worlds where they are, how, or the manner in which they are performed, the degree of how much or how little is done, and the times when they enter into each of these activities...
- 1729 DSG: For all of them.
- 1730 DSG: The five sense objects and the five consciousnesses that apprehend them.
- 1731 DSG: In the mental consciousness.
- 1732 DSG: The all ground consciousness.
- 1733 DSG: Dharmadhātu.
- 1734 DSG: In either saṃsāra or nirvāṇa.
- 1735 RL: The aspects of sexual union and attachment to associated feelings and objects.
- 1736 RL: Or whatever for whomever.
- 1737 DSG: By attaining the Sky Treasury meditative absorption.
- 1738 DSG: We can go where we like in space, including being unobstructed by walls and other forms.
- 1739 DSG: The undefiled space of [dharma]dhātu.
- 1740 DSG: Of limitless buddha activity, spontaneously fulfilling the needs of beings.
- 1741 RL: Dharmakāya and sambhogakāya, as taught above. Cf. Hopkins, p. 480.
- 1742 RL: The pure aspirations of beings on the path.
- 1743 RL: This teaching of the interpenetration of all phenomena is extensively presented in the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*.
- 1744 RL: Clear and clean.
- 1745 RL: By dying.
- 1746 RL: The buddhas' wisdom knows completely the natures of all sentient beings and spontaneously engages in whatever means will tame them, in the particular places and times where they abide.
- 1747 RL: Producing their temporal and ultimate spiritual benefit.
- 1748 DSG: Without conceptual thought or effort.

- 1749 DSG: The buddhas' compassion for those to be tamed arises spontaneously,
[because of those beings' former aspirations of bodhicitta and because of their
own good karma.]
- 1750 RL: Because they share the same essence, and because all beings will eventually
become buddhas.
- 1751 RL: Because both the extent of saṃsāra in space and time and the number of
beings to be tamed are limitless.
- 1752 DSG: Of ripening [with warmth,] drying, and so forth.
- 1753 DSG: As one.
- 1754 DSG: All for the benefit of other beings.
- 1755 DSG: Regarding the ultimate way of things.
- 1756 DSG: Are liberated by completing the two accumulations. Attaining liberation by
that,...
- 1757 RL: Who have yet to become noble ones on the path of seeing...
- 1758 RL: Enlightenment.
- 1759 DSG: Because worlds and beings are limitless.
- 1760 DSG: Changeless, hence...
- 1761 DSG: Of the path beyond concept.
- 1762 DSG: Such a path is suitable for producing that fruition, which does not occur
without it.
- 1763 DSG: In some places and times, they show limitless thousands of approaches to
Dharma to fulfill beings' needs.
- 1764 DSG: [Persons like those described in the *Jataka Tales*, who are] former lives of a
buddha [who will be enlightened later.]
- 1765 DSG: They manifest as a supreme nirmāṇakāya buddha.
- 1766 DSG: By the appearance of death of such a buddha.
- 1767 DSG: The uncontaminated, absolute dhātu. [It is also said that the buddhas'
sambhogakāya aspect always remains in the sambhogakāya realm, Akaniṣṭa.]
- 1768 DSG: By manifestations within saṃsāric existence.
- 1769 DSG: [Body, speech and mind, by] the three vehicles.
- 1770 DSG: So that adding more is impossible.
- 1771 DSG: Dharmadhātu.
- 1772 DSG: Because dharmadhātu is limitless.
- 1773 RL: Or gongs. One Sanskrit version has trumpets blown by the wind.
- 1774 RL: On appropriate occasions.
- 1775 DSG: Variant *gza' med* without grasping, i.e. concept/ *gzo'*, *med*, ābhoga: without
enjoyment, without action to establish it. Though it seemed good, it did not match

the original text, on checking. *Zhes 'bad pa'ang 'dzugs pas med 'dis ngos legs / ma yig mi 'dra dpyad*. Whatever Tibetan or Sanskrit text Dölpopa checked, the Sanskrit ābhoga did match two Sanskrit ones I checked. In any case, in the next instance, Dölpopa definitely accepts that reading over the first.

- 1776 DSG: In a limited way.
- 1777 DSG: Of a personal all ground consciousness.
- 1778 RL: The universal all ground that is pristine wisdom.
- 1779 RL: Of the relative.
- 1780 RL: And other communications of sambhogakāya.
- 1781 RL: Nirmāṇakāyas including, but not limited to, the Buddha as Supreme Nirmāṇakāya.
- 1782 RL: The speech of the buddhas.
- 1783 DSG: Transformed emanations of buddha body and speech, along with blessed ringsel relics and so forth.
- 1784 RL: Whose attainment is like space.
- 1785 RL: Here lapis lazuli works better than cat's eye.
- 1786 RL: Which would lead to divine rebirth.
- 1787 DSG: Who have accumulated sufficient merit.
- 1788 DSG: To attain buddhahood.
- 1789 DSG: They excellently practice the path by which buddhahood is attained.
- 1790 DSG: The cause of attainment, the two accumulations.
- 1791 RL: Against killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and drinking alcohol.
- 1792 DSG: In brief.
- 1793 DSG: Of dharmakāya as sambhogakāya.
- 1794 DSG: Respectively.
- 1795 DSG: They first appear and then are gone.
- 1796 DSG: Appearance of buddhas in beings' minds that later disappear.
- 1797 DSG: Real buddhas other than themselves.
- 1798 DSG: It is similar for appearances of speech.
- 1799 RL: Fortunate enough to be able to see him and hear the teachings.
- 1800 DSG: This is a simile about buddha speech.
- 1801 DSG: Effort, place, body, or mind.
- 1802 RL: Direct perception of emptiness.
- 1803 DSG: However, they are not equal in all ways.
- 1804 DSG: Purifying body, speech, and mind.

- 1805 DSG: Explaining how buddha speech reaches all beings.
- 1806 DSG: Now there is the extensive explanation of happiness and benefit.
- 1807 DSG: And other virtues.
- 1808 DSG: Now there is the summary and instruction.
- 1809 DSG: For gods, beings on the earth, and all other beings.
- 1810 DSG: Explaining how, even though buddha speech pervades all worlds, some cannot hear it.
- 1811 DSG: And not by others.
- 1812 DSG: Explaining of how wisdom and compassion are all-pervading.
- 1813 RL: The rainy season in India.
- 1814 DSG: They have merit that causes the good fortune of an abundant harvest.
- 1815 DSG: When it has fallen there.
- 1816 DSG: Regarding the buddhas' way of showing emanations.
- 1817 DSG: The path.
- 1818 RL: In the form realm of the first concentration.
- 1819 DSG: As the emanations of Bhramā.
- 1820 RL: They abandon sense pleasures, wanting to abide, like Bhramā, in the form realms beyond coarse desire.
- 1821 DSG: This is a fuller explanation.
- 1822 DSG: Turning the wheel of Dharma.
- 1823 RL: *Gdungs pas*, literally by the tormenters, since the sun in India can be painfully hot.
- 1824 DSG: No conception of beings' faults and virtues arises.
- 1825 DSG: Harvests of grain and so forth.
- 1826 RL: Comparable to mountains not being in shadow is beings having sufficient merit.
- 1827 DSG: [With varying degrees of merit.] However, they are not equal in all ways.
- 1828 DSG: As the Buddha's wisdom can.
- 1829 DSG: Does the sun.
- 1830 DSG: As the Buddha's wisdom can.
- 1831 RL: Corresponding to different buddha families to which beings are receptive.
- 1832 RL: So that nonconceptual reality is not meaningful for them.
- 1833 DSG: When that is attained, they directly perceive dharmatā.
- 1834 DSG: A king of such gems. Here it is taught how non-conceptual mind fulfills all wishes.

- 1835 DSG: Now the way of arising is taught.
- 1836 DSG: Now the uncompounded kāya is compared to space.
- 1837 DSG: To consciousness.
- 1838 DSG: Not graspable as a conceptual, mental object.
- 1839 DSG: That is uncompounded.
- 1840 DSG: That is the ground of white phenomena that are seen.
- 1841 DSG: Teaching another example of that ground.
- 1842 DSG: But it transcends the sphere of logicians. Now, as for the explanation of the examples.
- 1843 DSG: Arising in the ground.
- 1844 DSG: Now ways are taught in which buddhahood is not the same, but better than the examples.
- 1845 DSG: The reflection of Indra does not have the Buddha's melodious speech.
- 1846 DSG: In good instruction.
- 1847 DSG: In having wisdom and loving compassion.
- 1848 DSG: In showing emanations.
- 1849 DSG: In radiating rays of pristine wisdom.
- 1850 DSG: In his mind.
- 1851 DSG: In his speech.
- 1852 DSG: In his body.
- 1853 RL: Of the relative.
- 1854 DSG: There are no relative phenomena other than those.
- 1855 DSG: Not observing relative phenomena.
- 1856 DSG: Pacification of dualistic consciousness. By that the ground of dualistic consciousness, pristine wisdom, is attained, and 'other' reality is achieved, for example...
- 1857 DSG: Power of the...
- 1858 RL: The brahmin Sanku, by the power of mantra.
- 1859 RL: In the same way, beings' former pure aspirations have a powerful fruition later.
- 1860 DSG: The relative merit [that produces later effects of realizing pristine wisdom.]
- 1861 DSG: The point is not that wisdom cannot come from something without wisdom. [It is about how the eternal wisdom of the buddhas can be revealed by relative causation that operates over many lives.]
- 1862 RL: In general, since dharmakāya is a unity, the retinue are not different on that level. They are different on the dualistic level of nirmāṇakāya, because their single essence is not experienced there. In sambhogakāya, they are said to be half-

emanations, because they are experienced as having different forms, but the same essence.

- 1863 RL: As the water in a lake might be purified of turbidity and so forth by various conditioned means like filtration, and letting it be to allow its natural settling.
- 1864 RL: Nāgārjuna is giving this advice to a king. Hopkins translation, p. 22n, says that he is variously identified as Gautamīputra Śātakarṇī and Udayi.
- 1865 DSG: In manifestation.
- 1866 RL: It helps to remember that self-emptiness applies only to objects of assertions about conceptual characteristics. That is also the case for assertions that the essences of dharmakāya and the five pristine wisdoms exist absolutely. However, assertions that these objects exist are valid conventionally, because they are irrefutably established on that level. They are established by consciousness for objects in the world, and by the experience of pristine wisdom for objects beyond the world. I think that most opposition to Dōlpopa's viewpoint arises from unclarity about such distinctions.
- 1867 RL: In the Jonangpa school that is accomplished by practice of the six unions. This text deals with the view associated with that practice, but the details of practice must be learned from one's guru.
- 1868 RL: With a red-orange sunrise color, as opposed to the white or yellow sun of fruition.
- 1869 RL: A and HAṂ together are AHAM, "I," the great self of the fruition, as formerly discussed.
- 1870 RL: A well-known yogic practice that involves stopping and holding the winds.
- 1871 RL: Cease to be separate energies moving in their respective side channels
- 1872 DSG: The [dual] grasper and grasped, knower and known, [of consciousness are unified in the central channel as non-dual pristine wisdom.]
- 1873 RL: Between different, inner configurations of wind and bindus of the sexual essences in the channels.
- 1874 DSG: By the ceasing of the sun and moon, from the subsiding of day and night, at the sixteenth phase of the moon, [between the white period of waxing to the full and the black of waning]
- 1875 DSG: When the white and black periods [of waxing and waning] are both absent, at the end of the new moon day between them.
- 1876 RL: Invisible, at the end of the new moon day.
- 1877 RL: Identified with these winds, or with the red and white drops, as explained before.
- 1878 RL: Of the non-dual fruition.
- 1879 RL: Until they cease.
- 1880 DSG: As the primordially abiding, inseparable union of skillful means and prajñā.
- 1881 DSG: [The feminine energy,] the fire of tummo at the navel.
- 1882 DSG: [The masculine essence,] in the great bliss of melting.

- 1883 RL: The left and right winds and other paired opposites mentioned above. When they are united, their relative aspects cease, and only the absolute remains, so that relative wisdom is no different than that which is absolute.
- 1884 RL: As an intrinsic quality of their essence.
- 1885 DSG: Of phenomena of grasper and grasped.
- 1886 RL: At the juncture of the end of the fifteenth day of the full moon and the beginning of the sixteenth that begins the period of the waning moon. The Buddha literally attained enlightenment at that time.
- 1887 DSG: Free from [material particles, and] dust [of dualistic projections of grasped and grasped.]
- 1888 DSG: ...To be tamed in accord with their thoughts and wishes
- 1889 RL: *pho med* can also mean without outflow by the emission of worldly orgasm. This is explained extensively in the *Kālacakra*.
- 1890 DSG: [Either or both the winds moving in] the left and right [channels], or the upper and lower [life and downward-voiding winds.]
- 1891 DSG: When these two winds have been eliminated by meditation on the supreme path, we go to the city of the great liberation.
- 1892 DSG: The wind of the Middle Way.
- 1893 DSG: [Stabilized] by meditation on that.
- 1894 DSG: According to the gurus' instructions. [Since this is yoga practice, it is primarily such practice that is repeated rather than mantra and liturgies that also occur in a traditional yogic practice session.]
- 1895 RL: The details should be learned from the guru in an actual practice situation.
- 1896 DSG: By the transformation described.
- 1897 RL: As explained above, their changeless natures can be either incidentally defiled or free from such defilements.
- 1898 RL: Since it never existed at all, it cannot even be abandoned.
- 1899 RL: The dependent exists as mere patterns of regularity among phenomena that are valuable for worldly purposes, including practicing the path. However, projecting onto these patterns confused beliefs about real objects in the external world with real causal forces between them should be abandoned, as it hinders both worldly and world-transcending goals.
- 1900 RL: When it is purified, this purity that was a distinction within the experienced relative, is one with experience of eternal purity that never changes.
- 1901 RL: A substance with only the nature of water would be pure water.
- 1902 DSG: Teaching that dependent [relative] mind is not luminous is to eliminate assertions by some that self-empty [relative] mind may be naturally luminous.
- 1903 DSG: During the white period of waxing.
- 1904 RL: Apparently.
- 1905 DSG: At first the moon is all shaded, and then, in fifteen parts, this shadow

- appears to decrease until it is gone.
- 1906 DSG: The actual sphere of the moon neither grows nor diminishes.
- 1907 DSG: Occurring within the truth of the path.
- 1908 DSG: With attainment included in the truth of cessation.
- 1909 DSG: [So revealing] the self-arisen attainment of the truth of cessation.
- 1910 DSG: When it does not appear because of defilements.
- 1911 DSG: It is not newly completed, when it manifests in fruition
- 1912 DSG: [Absolutely existent] sugatagarbha.
- 1913 DSG: Maintaining that even the absolute is empty, that whatever is empty arises interdependently, and that whatever arises interdependently is impermanent, hence the absolute is impermanent.
- 1914 DSG: [Fallaciously] maintaining that, [since absolute, permanent dharmakāya is the essence of everything,] whatever arises is really dharmakāya, [and therefore, even the delusive three realms are permanent dharmakāya.]
- 1915 DSG: The three realms of saṃsāra.
- 1916 DSG: Leads to accumulating bad karma, which...
- 1917 DSG: Tiny pieces like dust.
- 1918 DSG: The food and drink they see.
- 1919 DSG: When it is written down.
- 1920 RL: That is, very short.
- 1921 DSG: Realizing that the three worlds are delusive, [they understand that conclusion to be established.]
- 1922 DSG: In the fundamental way things are.
- 1923 RL: The apparent relative nature of dualistic phenomena, not their absolute nature, sugatagarbha.
- 1924 DSG: All of relative truth, [what is expressible in conceptual assertions, is analyzed as inconsistent, imputation that cannot correspond with reality. This part of Dōlpopa's presentation is within the scope of logicians.]
- 1925 RL: Dōlpopa accepts the unqualified version as a description of the prajñā of formless meditation, but not as a description of the pristine wisdom of subsequent attainment.
- 1926 DSG: Of delusion.
- 1927 RL: Mind, mental factors, and saṃsāric objects resulting from that process of dualistic conceptualization.
- 1928 RL: They are revealed as non-existent.
- 1929 RL: In the relative.
- 1930 DSG: The highest noble ones, [such as tenth level bodhisattvas.]

- 1931 DSG: These unreal appearances [of child-like, ordinary beings.]
- 1932 DSG: The relative and the absolute, [respectively]
- 1933 RL: To pristine wisdom.
- 1934 DSG: The fundamental way things are, the absolute.
- 1935 DSG: The [superimposed] way things are not, the relative.
- 1936 DSG: What kind of darkness would produce that [perverse distortion, and then call it wisdom? The implication is that exponents of literal self-emptiness do this.]
- 1937 DSG: ...Than dharmatā, svābhavikakāya.
- 1938 DSG: The relative.
- 1939 DSG: The fundamental true nature, [the absolute.]
- 1940 RL: Abhidharma says that sense perception in itself is non-conceptual. Its mere appearance is absolutely as it is. However, beings project their preconceptions onto sense perception, then erroneously think they see the objects of their preconceptions. Buddhas do not make such errors.
- 1941 RL: Of the six senses.
- 1942 RL: Relative sense objects.
- 1943 RL: Which literally means “union with the natural state,” how things truly are.
- 1944 RL: It follows that those who see the delusive appearances that result from other beings’ karma without being deluded by attachment to them as real are not bound, but liberated. As Tilopa says” Appearance does not bind, attachment binds. / Therefore, cut attachment Nāropa.
- 1945 RL: Of grasper and grasped.
- 1946 RL: Features of conceptual language are delusively projected onto reality.
- 1947 RL: *Kun rtog / brtags*: mere imagination, conceptualized imputation that does not correspond to reality. One of the three natures.
- 1948 RL: Absolute dharmatā.
- 1949 RL: When a magician’s spell makes people see an ordinary object like a stick or stone as a marauding elephant, they feel inappropriate fear. When habitual propensities of delusion make people see non-dual dharmatā as dualistic phenomena, they feel inappropriate passion, aggression and gratification in ignoring inconvenient truths.
- 1950 RL: Delusion is appearance of what does not exist. Afflictive emotions are inappropriate feelings that would be appropriate, if the delusion truly existed. Appearance of what does exist and non-appearance of what does not exist are characteristic of pristine wisdom. Therefore, pristine wisdom is free from both delusion and afflictive emotions. There are still appropriate emotions like sorrow for the suffering of beings who are our former mothers and the great compassion.
- 1951 RL: That is correct if it is actually seen how they are not separate from dharmatā. However, someone who thinks that knowing the truth of the abstract statement, “No saṃsāric phenomena truly exist,” makes the knower an omniscient buddha is sadly deceived. This was established previously. The buddhas’ knowing is seeing

that accomplishes all. That is the main point of this text.

1952 RL: False, relative phenomena.

1953 RL: That are conceptualized.

1954 RL: Formations would be expected, but it says intentions.

1955 RL: In the sense of these two terms explained above.

1956 RL: The Dharma of realization of things as they are.

1957 RL: It is not a phenomenon that is seen, but a conceptual superimposition on phenomena.

1958 RL: Since all phenomena are already included.

1959 RL: By not seeing them.

1960 RL: I would argue that skillfully not seeing the phenomena of samsara means not seeing them with delusive, dualistic attachment. That is seeing them as they are within the non-dual absolute. Otherwise there could be no compassionate buddha activity at all.

1961 DSG: Seeing dharmatā.

1962 RL: *Lhag mthong*, Tibetan for vipaśyanā.

1963 DSG: Of the three realms [or any relative phenomena.]

1964 RL: The problem here is that appear means appear falsely, and know means attached acceptance of that false appearance as true. If these phenomena appear as they are and the truth of that is accepted, the problem vanishes.

1965 RL: Read: False phenomena negated by pristine wisdom are known, even though they do not appear falsely.

1966 RL: Read: The true ground of negation, dharmatā, is known because it does appear truly.

1967 RL: I think that is a logical conclusion by advocates of the second turning about the meaning of the terms involved within the second turning.

1968 RL: I do not know this list. Hopkins, p. 535n, cites a similar list of nine, according to Aku Rabji: 2. mirror, 2. thumb, 3. lamp, 4. flame, 5. moon, 6. sun, 7. water, 8. knife, and 9. eye.

1969 RL: In the sense where phenomena can be either relative or absolute.

1970 RL: As indeed they are by the conceptual analysis of the second turning. We must distinguish the logical establishment of the second turning from the experiential establishment of the third.

1971 RL: I think that means 1. it is established, as Nāgārjuna does in the second turning, by pure logical inference from the meaning of the terms. We naturally conclude, from knowing the terms and things themselves, that self-contradictory concepts cannot perfectly apply to experience. 2. Then, we see delusory phenomena as they are, as deluded, within pristine wisdom that is not deluded. As The Pearl Mala says: And so the appearance of variety / Is like a rope regarded as a snake / By grasping it as something it is not.

- 1972 RL: If we see something blue, we think, "This is blue." Then we think, "This is not non-blue."
- 1973 RL: In the first moment of perception, where we think, "This is observed."
- 1974 RL: The expression in conceptual language of a comparison between a generalized image in the mental sense and perceived phenomena is called inferential valid cognition. However, this inference must be preceded by a non-conceptual merely perceptual recognition in the mental sense of difference between the sensory and mental phenomena. That is perceptual natural understanding.
- 1975 RL: The expression in conceptual language of a comparison between a generalized image in the mental sense and perceived phenomena is called inferential valid cognition. However, this inference must be preceded by a non-conceptual merely perceptual recognition in the mental sense of difference between the sensory and mental phenomena. That is perceptual natural understanding.
- 1976 RL: Because three of the four noble truths are concerned with the relative.
- 1977 RL: Two of the three natures, the dependent and the imagined,...
- 1978 RL: Meaning that the buddhas know them.
- 1979 RL: Or appearing as non-existent, like thinking, "That rope could easily be taken to be a snake. That what does not exist can seem to appear so clearly, in the minds of gullible beings, is something very strange, HA HA!"
- 1980 RL: Variant, the lord of mountains = Mount Meru.
- 1981 RL: Dölpopa seems to argue that buddhas, blind to the three realms, have to read them off of some kind of celestial teleprompter. How do they know the reading is accurate? To me, these revelations are evidence for concluding that phenomena of mere appearance experienced by beings are absolutely real, because there is no claim that anything exists beyond what is experienced. If so these non-delusive phenomena could also be experienced by the buddhas. To deny this is to lose the best logical argument for the existence of an experiential absolute altogether.
- 1982 RL: Describing all this consistently is very tricky. If seeing in the mind something intrinsically outside the mind is impossible, then even the appearance of such an external object in the mind is impossible. However, sentient beings constantly believe they see such things and somehow project their impossible delusions onto sense phenomena. Buddhas experience the delusive experiences in the minds of beings of the six realms, that are like illusory hairs falling before the eyes; but they also know that those experiences are deluded. Sometimes it is said they do not have the same experiences beings do, or they too would be deluded.
- 1983 RL: Thus, even though in one sense such appearances are impossible, because our conceptions of them are found to be contradictory on analysis; in another sense, such appearances epitomize all ordinary experience.
- 1984 RL: Meditation, *manyam bzhag*, here is equated with seeing from the viewpoint of pristine wisdom, though most of what we call "meditation" falls short of that.
- 1985 RL: Variant ye shes des/ nges don -wisdom does not know the definitive meaning, less good.
- 1986 RL: Dölpopa does not agree that false, dualistic objects occur in true pristine wisdom of how things are.

- 1987 DSG: On the four paths of learning [preceding buddhahood.]
- 1988 RL: The buddhas' meditation is not the formless *śamatha* focused on emptiness referred to by the objection above. It combines that with the ultimate *vipaśyanā* of pristine wisdom that sees things as they are.
- 1989 RL: For example, if Buddhas are said to be restricted to meditation without proliferation, they will have the pristine wisdom of the nature of phenomena, but how can they have the pristine wisdom of their extent? Even knowing it without experiencing it would be a conceptual proliferation. If the buddhas' pristine wisdom of subsequent attainment is dualistic, then delusive dualistic phenomena appear in pristine wisdom, and so the buddhas' pristine wisdom is delusive.
- 1990 RL: This homage praises all the aspects and qualities down to "I prostrate," as aspects of *dharmakāya*.
- 1991 RL: The Dharma of realization = that *dharmakāya*.
- 1992 RL: *Sambhogakāya*.
- 1993 RL: Though from one viewpoint in which *dharmakāya* is the single primordial *kāya*, they can be regarded as its aspects
- 1994 RL: One variant omits essence, *ngo bo*.
- 1995 DSG: [Already] pervading all things, the produced, [proliferated,] or emanated aspects and the aspects gathered into one, and, in that sense, without proliferations.
- 1996 DSG: [Because, within it, all these qualities] have no faults of contradiction.
- 1997 RL: Because *sambhogakāya* is a relative aspect of enlightenment that is created by merit.
- 1998 RL: "Great" might also go with "retinue" as "great retinue" or "retinue of the great."
- 1999 RL: Perhaps in some places.
- 2000 RL: Perhaps sometimes.
- 2001 RL: The Buddha.
- 2002 DSG: He explains how beings can be joined to permanent benefit and happiness, and how they can be separated from conditions opposing those.
- 2003 DSG: Explaining how beings can be inseparable from benefit and happiness.
- 2004 DSG: The commentary also explains that the Buddha brings benefit and happiness to beings by the four immeasurables: lovingkindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity.
- 2005 Or completely.
- 2006 DSG: Of your [all-pervading] senses.
- 2007 DSG: Equally in the totality of your sense fields, *zad par skye mched*, and from opposing conditions to that...
- 2008 DSG: The Buddha without afflictive emotions.
- 2009 DSG: Knowing merely through aspiration by self-existing perception, manifesting

without possessing desire, [for it to do so.]

- 2010 DSG: Regarding qualities of an excellent teacher, from the four kinds of correct discrimination, *so so yang dag par rig pa bzhi*, correct discrimination of qualities, *chos*.
- 2011 DSG: Correct discrimination of meanings, *don*.
- 2012 DSG: Correct discrimination of languages, *nges tshig*.
- 2013 DSG: Correct discrimination of ready, confident speech, *spobs*.
- 2014 RL: Unlimited understanding.
- 2015 DSG: Having gone before sentient beings miraculously through the six higher perceptions... [Another interpretation is "having gone through and learned all this previously," which is also true.]
- 2016 DSG: By knowing others' minds, knowing all their activities.
- 2017 DSG: In a form [like] a god by knowing their, these beings,' languages, by remembering former lives, knowing sentient beings' past lives to the limits of saṃsāra, knowing...
- 2018 DSG: The manner of their coming here, and their going to other lives, by death, transmigration, and rebirth, and the manner of their deliverance from saṃsāra, by their defilements being exhausted.
- 2019 DSG: Adorned with the major and minor marks,
- 2020 DSG: A mind of faith.
- 2021 DSG: Through the four aspects of complete purity, capable of receiving, abiding in and departing from a pure body.
- 2022 DSG: Through purity of observation capable of emanation and transformation of things that exist.
- 2023 DSG: Through purity of mind, capable of bringing all phenomena into meditative absorption.
- 2024 DSG: Through completely pure prajñā capable of experiencing all aspects of pristine wisdom, and by these capabilities a master of these,...
- 2025 DSG: The ten powers of a tathāgata, *stobs bcu*. By the first, māras who deceive about means are overcome, by the second, those who deceive about refuge, by the second, those who deceive about purity, and by the rest, those who deceive about deliverance by the path of the Great Vehicle.
- 2026 DSG: The benefit of oneself and...
- 2027 DSG: Four Fearlessnesses, *mi 'jigs pa bzhi*. Two each apply to benefiting self and others. The first two apply to wisdom and abandoning. The second two apply to deliverance and hindrance.
- 2028 DSG: Among his retinue, he does not forget the three that do not need to be guarded, *bsrung ba med pa gsum*, because they are faultless, body, speech, and mind, and the three or four objects of mindfulness. Since he does not need to guard his speech, he can be generous with speech.
- 2029 DSG: By mindfulness without forgetting, forsaking the two ever-present

afflictions, desire and aversion, by those means,...

- 2030 DSG: Having overcome all hindrances of habitual propensities.
- 2031 DSG: This verse concerns the Buddha not being forgetful.
- 2032 DSG: Three times each day and three times each night.
- 2033 DSG: This verse concerns the Buddha's great compassion.
- 2034 DSG: By the eighteen unique qualities of a buddha.
- 2035 DSG: The six that are gathered by action.
- 2036 DSG: The six that are gathered by realization.
- 2037 DSG: Pristine wisdom that includes past, present, and future.
- 2038 DSG: Activity of body, speech, and mind preceded and followed by pristine wisdom.
- 2039 DSG: Hence these eighteen phenomena are higher than all others.
- 2040 DSG: Omniscient knowledge of all aspects, knowing all aspects of all knowables.
- 2041 DSG: Through not grasping at enjoyments, activities, and so forth, [generosity is perfected.]
- 2042 RL: In discipline.
- 2043 RL: Perfecting patience.
- 2044 DSG: In concepts of "this is bad" and so forth, [that would interrupt exertion.]
- 2045 DSG: By not being distractible, [hence perfecting meditation.]
- 2046 DSG: Reversing [relative] phenomena, [hence perfecting prajñā of the absolute.]
- 2047 DSG: These six characteristics refer respectively to the six perfections.
- 2048 DSG: The way of attaining svābhavikakāya, free from all defilements.
- 2049 DSG: The various worlds and maṇḍalas, spheres of being, that constitute saṃsāra, manifesting as nirmanakaya.
- 2050 DSG: Which is sambhogakāya, as for dharmatā, svābhavikakāya, there are unborn deities.
- 2051 DSG: [Buddhas] do not see all the non-existent aspects of saṃsāra, but see the existent phenomena of pristine wisdom alone.
- 2052 DSG: Included within the two truths.
- 2053 DSG: This final stanza is my (Dōlpopa's) own aspirations.
- 2054 RL: Ratna, from the five families of tantra.
- 2055 RL: Except the perfection of prajñā.
- 2056 RL: The absolute three jewels and the guru as their embodiment.
- 2057 RL: Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, and Vajrapāṇi.
- 2058 RL: They become obsessed with viciously attacking other schools.

2059 RL: One of the three qualities, guṇas, of Sāṃkhya and the Kālacakra.

2060 RL: Shame is concerned with how one sees oneself, and decency with how we are seen by others.

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